هكذا من الاصل

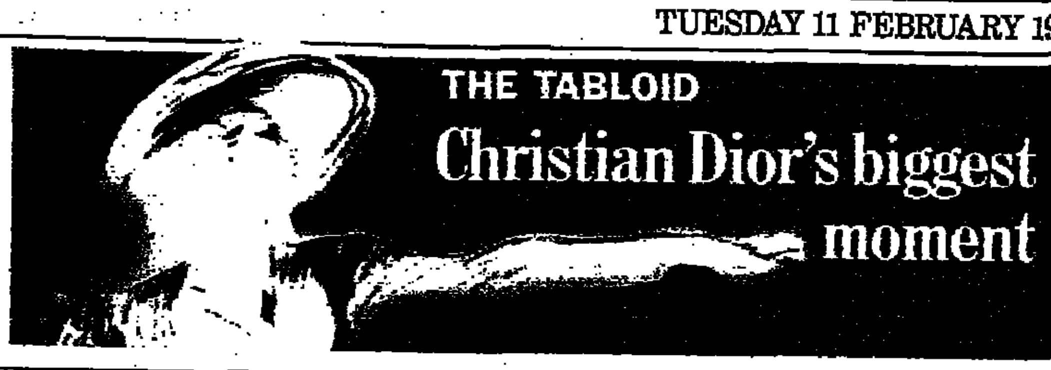
THE UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN SERIALS DIVISION

ELECTION '97: no one's pulling our strings

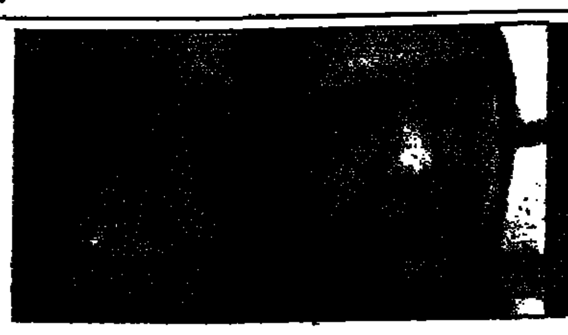
THE INDEPENDENT

Nº 3,217 TUESDAY 11 FEBRUARY 1997 WEATHER: Heavy rain spreading from the west (IR45p) 40p

THE TABLOID
Why we are sadder than our parents



THE TABLOID
Christian Dior's biggest moment



NEWS
The nanny who could face a murder charge

Blair hit by Old Labour junketing

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR
Westminster Correspondent

Council auditor criticises drunken lunches, foreign trips and free-loading

A council run by a tightly-knit group of Labour politicians, two of whom are front runners to fight a parliamentary by-election, has been strongly criticised by the District Auditor over junkets, expenses, and "inappropriate" gifts and hospitality.

The criticisms are an embarrassment to Tony Blair because they dent New Labour's image and resurrect the spectre of old-fashioned town hall politics which the Labour leader is desperate to shed.

Councillors on Doncaster council, where Labour has an overwhelming majority, went on trips around the world, including to Japan, Hong Kong, China, Sweden, Poland and the United States, without formal authority and no public records of the trips were kept by the council.

According to the District Auditor, the accountant who audits the council's accounts, councillors on some trips flew club class – breaching council rules. They went on drunken binges running up staggering bills, with one meal for two costing £284 and "working" lunches at £50 per head where most of the bill was for alcohol.

At a meeting last month of leading officers and councillors, the District Auditor, Gordon Sutton, said: "The level of alcohol consumed at these lunches makes it unlikely that those attending them could do any work in the afternoon, let alone stand up." Councillors and officials accepted "inappropriate" hospitality including raffle tickets where the prize was a trip for two to the Kentucky Derby.

The revelations will cause widespread alarm at Labour Party headquarters, which only last week published a document stressing the virtues of the party's local government stewardship. It is particularly embarrassing because the selection process for the vacant Don Valley seat, caused by the death of Martin Redmond, has just begun.

Two councillors and front-runners for the nomination – the council leader, Peter Welsh, and Labour group chairman, Tony Sellars, lead a small group of Labour councillors which acts as an inner caucus running the council.

Tory Central Office, which will do its utmost to exploit Labour's embarrassment, has known of events in Doncaster for some time but had hoped to keep a lid on them until the election campaign. The Tories will also find it harder to launch an attack on Labour's record on local government since the amounts of money involved in Doncaster pale into insignificance compared with the £20m surcharge imposed on councillors and officers in Tory-controlled Westminster.

Mr Welsh went to Japan in December, where he visited a racecourse. Mr Sellars, who on Sunday night won the nomination from the ward to select its candidate for Don Valley, went on four trips – to China, Poland, Sweden and Jersey. Mr Sellars accepted yesterday he had been on a twinning trip to the Chinese town of Dandong travelling business class, but could not recollect whether he had been on the other trips. He said: "I will have to look at my diary we have a system of authorisation by officers. Maybe we rely on officers too much."

The District Auditor told last month's meeting of senior officers and councillors that there was a "lack of control" over the foreign visits, that the rules were "ambiguous and open to interpretation", and there was "abuse of the system".

Although the chief executive, Doug Hale, had authority to sanction trips, sometimes this had not been sought. Mr Sutton said: "Foreign trips had taken place without authority from the chief executive or members."

Some council members had travelled club or business class, whereas council rules specified economy. Mr Sutton also questioned the payment of £30 per day subsistence allowances to councillors for "incidental" expenses when, in fact, council credit cards issued to them were already used to pay for mini bars, telephone bills and videos. A source at the District Auditor's office said: "There is evidence that overclaiming has occurred."

A council policy and resources committee voted last week to withdraw all but six of the 27 council credit cards which had been issued to councillors and senior officers. It also voted to scrap foreign trips, saving an estimated £115,000 per year and the £12,000-a-year Jaguar, leased to council leaders is to be returned.

Doncaster owns the local racecourse at which the free bar for members of the racecourse committee and a free drink for any other councillor also came under criticism from Mr Sutton.

The overall cost came out of a special budget which the council said amounted to less than £200,000. Last week, the council also discussed proposed cuts of £8m in its budget because of reductions in central government grant. A council spokesman said last night that the District Auditor's report was being acted on and new guidelines drawn up.

Further report, page 11

Tory threat: We will make the Scots pay

Anthony Bevins
Political Editor

The Conservatives yesterday threatened to punish the Scottish people with an annual penalty of almost £6bn in cutbacks if they allow Labour to set up an Edinburgh parliament.

Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth warned that the differential between spending north and south of the border – amounting to more than £890 extra for every man, woman and child in Scotland – could be slashed from central Government spending.

But George Robertson, Labour's spokesman, told *The Independent*: "The Scottish people do not recognise that they are being subsidised, and see no signs of it about them.

"In England, people think that if the Scots are being that lavishly subsidised, why did Mrs Thatcher do nothing about it?"

After a day of disarray and confusion in Cabinet ranks, with Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell twice appearing to contradict the Government line on Labour's devolution plans, the Prime Minister's office said there was no disagreement between ministers.

Repudiating a suggestion that a future Conservative government would abolish the Scottish parliament – a threat reportedly made by Mr Dorrell in an interview with *The Scotsman* – Mr Forsyth said: "A Scottish parliament is not just for Christmas; it's for life."

He also contradicted Mr Dorrell's statement, in a BBC radio interview yesterday, that there would have to be changes to any Scottish parliament that was set up by Labour.

Mr Forsyth said a parliament would be irrevocable, adding: "Once Humpty Dumpty falls off the wall, he will not be put back together again no matter how many of the king's horses and the king's men turn up...

"It would grow into a creature which might do enormous damage in Scotland, but we would have to live with the consequence of it."

However, Mr Forsyth said: "If people in Scotland vote for a tax-raising parliament, and that is established, then the consequences that follow from that in terms of the rights of Scottish members of Parliament to vote at Westminster, the whole question of the funding of Scotland's parliament – at the moment, Scotland is about 30 per cent better funded per head than England – all of those issues will need to be resolved, and there will be very dramatic and adverse consequences for Scotland."

The Scottish Office last night provided figures showing that in the latest available year, identifiable spending by country was £3,614 for England and £4,505 in Scotland in 1994-95.

If the 24.6 per cent differential was cut from the identifiable, £23,120m Scottish budget for 1994-95, it would have cost Scotland a penalty of about £5.7bn.

A senior Labour source said Mr Forsyth was maintaining his tactic of trying "to frighten the children", while Mr Dorrell was adopting the softer line that action could be taken to mitigate the impact of a new parliament.

In a letter to the Prime Minister last night, Mr Robertson said: "There is now a deep and disturbing division within your Cabinet on this aspect of your Government's policy on devolution, with the Scottish Secretary apparently isolated. Can you say which side you support?"

Jim Wallace, leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats, told BBC radio: "Stephen Dorrell has blundered out of his depth. He doesn't appreciate sensitivities in Scotland. If the objective of the Conservative and Unionist Party is to save the Union, I can't think of one act more calculated to break it up than to give people a Scottish parliament then try to take it away."

Donald Macintyre, page 19

BRIDGEMAN ART LIBRARY/PHOTOMONTAGE: JEROME CORNICK

QUICKLY

Albanian city seized
Anti-government demonstrators seized control of the southern Albanian port of Vlora, stripping riot police of guns, gear, and even their clothes as they demanded the resignation of the government and return of money lost in failed pyramid schemes. Page 15

Ashworth suspension
A consultant became the fourth member of staff at Ashworth Hospital to be been suspended following claims that pornography and paedophilia were permitted in the hospital. Page 5

Violence hits Spain
Separatist violence ripped through Spain from north to south when a car bomb killed a man and wounded eight people in Granada, a gunman shot dead a Supreme Court judge in the street in Madrid, and the leader of the Basque nationalist party linked to Eta separatists was found dead, possibly by his own hand, near Bilbao. Page 14

Segers denial
The former Wimbledon goalkeeper Hans Segers, who is accused of taking part in a conspiracy to fix matches, told a jury he had never thrown a game in his life. Page 11

NHS retreat
A retreat on the National Health Service Primary Care Bill is expected by the Secretary of State for Health, Stephen Dorrell, in order to avoid a row with family doctors, over the so-called "supermarket" surgeries, which the Conservatives believe could undermine their election campaign. Page 6

Governor's choice
Elton John is to take part in the hand-over of Hong Kong to China in June, when thousands of tourists are expected to witness the British withdrawal from the colony, which officially takes place at midnight on 30 June. The superstar's presence for the ceremony is the choice of the Governor, Chris Patten, a long-standing fan. Page 2

Bank raises stakes
The Bank of England is poised to raise the stakes in its clash with Kenneth Clarke with a renewed demand in its Inflation Report tomorrow for interest rates to rise. But the Chancellor is widely expected to put politics first and avoid increasing borrowing and mortgage costs before the election. Page 20

HOME & CONTENTS INSURANCE

BUILDINGS SUM INSURED	CONTENTS SUM INSURED	ANNUAL PREMIUM
£250,000	£35,000	£395
£500,000	£50,000	£595
£750,000	£75,000	£795
£1,000,000	£100,000	£995

MORE COVER FOR LESS
Home & Legacy offers the widest cover for the lowest premiums in the UK including free accidental damage and worldwide cover for contents and valuables.

NO AREA LOADING
These premiums quoted are true for anywhere in England, Scotland, Wales, Channel Islands and Isle of Man.

PERSONAL, CONFIDENTIAL & EFFICIENT SERVICE
Call Robyn Harris direct on
0171 824 8224
9am - 6pm, Monday to Friday

home legacy
INSURANCE SERVICES LIMITED
BACKED BY THE UK'S LEADING INSURERS

Premiums quoted are for new policies only and are valid for a period of 14 days from the date of this publication and are subject to. The home being of standard construction and free from history of subsidence or flooding. Satisfactory physical security in force at the home. Satisfactory claims experience and acceptance of risk by Insurers; Policy terms and conditions. Our minimum premium level is £395.

The elderly inherit, not the meek, as thrift leads to record number of millionaires

Steve Boggan

The meek are not inheriting the earth – the elderly are. According to new research into the distribution of wealth in the United Kingdom, one in 550 adults is a millionaire, and the fastest-growing group are pensioners.

More than 81,000 people are now classed as millionaires, the most in history, and, for the first time, the number who have grown rich by graft and thrift has overtaken those who have inherited wealth.

The research, by Datamonitor, a strategic management consultancy, shows that the number of millionaires – people with net, unencumbered assets over £1m and £50,000 in liquid assets – has more than doubled since 1991 when the figure stood at 31,100.

More than 19,000 of those are over 65, but only 17,000 out of the total of 81,000 inherited their money.

"This shows a major shift in wealth reflecting people's concerns about providing for themselves in their old age, rather than relying on state provision," said Hamsa Yogasundram, an analyst at Datamonitor.

"People are saving more and investing more, a trend which is resulting in the elderly having more spending power than before.

"People who inherit their money still form a large proportion of millionaires, but it is a shrinking proportion."

Datamonitor's figures, gleaned from public records at the Inland Revenue, the Central Statistical Office and the Office of National Statistics, show that in 1991, 8.2 per cent of millionaires were elderly – over 65 – compared with 9.5 per cent who were inheritors.

By 1995, the balance had shifted to 19.1 per cent elderly and 16.8 per cent inheritors.

Of all millionaires, 24 per cent are elderly, almost 21 per cent inherited their wealth and 12 per cent saved it from highly paid employment. Last year, of the 10,000 new millionaires, 2,000 were elderly, 1,200 were inheritors and 810 were workers.

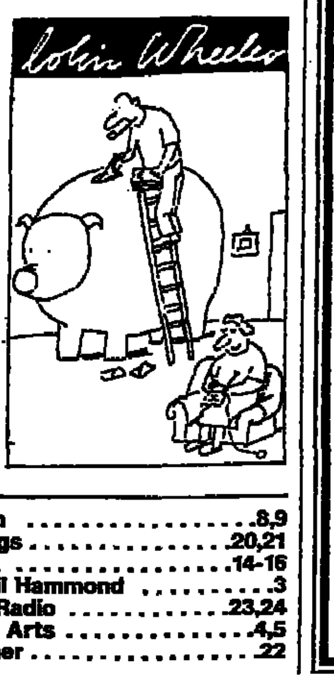
There is also a small, but increasingly significant, group who have gained their wealth through the National Lottery. By the end of 1996, there were 288 lottery millionaires; the figure now is nearer 300.

The research does not, however, look at the strikingly obvious – the fact that more millionaires at the top must equate to more poor people at the bottom.

Datamonitor is preparing new research on what it calls the "middle bracket" of earners, those with £10,000 to £100,000.

However, asked whether a third piece of research would be forthcoming on the poor, Datamonitor said no. "There's not much call for that," said Mr Yogasundram.

Just as well. The price for a copy of the latest report, *UK High Net Worth Individuals 1997*, is £1,495.



CONTENTS

THE BROADSHEET
Business & City 20-24
Comment 17-29
Essay 18
Foreign News 12-15
Gazette 16
Home News 2-11
Law report 16
Leading Articles 17
Letters 17
Obituaries 16
Shares 23
Sport 25-28
Unit Trusts 24

THE TABLOID
Arts 6,7
Arts Reviews 19
Crossword 22
Culture 2,3
Fashion 12,13
Games 22
Health 8,9
Listings 20,21
Media 14-16
Dr Phil Hammond 3
TV & Radio 23,24
Visual Arts 4,5
Weather 22

07
9 770951 946429

news

significant shorts

Blair attacks Chancellor over £14bn 'black hole'

Tony Blair yesterday called on the Chancellor of the Exchequer to clarify whether or not there was a "black hole" in the Government's finances.

The Labour leader was referring to a report in yesterday's *Independent* that the National Institute of Economic and Social Research has calculated there will need to be tax increases or public spending cuts of up to £14bn. "What this indicates yet again is a great big black hole in the public finances," Mr Blair said.

Speaking at a news conference on Labour's plans for small business, he added: "What I would like to know is what the Chancellor of the Exchequer says to this. Is this true or not? Does this deficit exist or not?"

The study by the National Institute, headed by Treasury adviser, Martin Weale, is due to be published next month.

Diane Coyle

Jury fails to reach verdict on killing

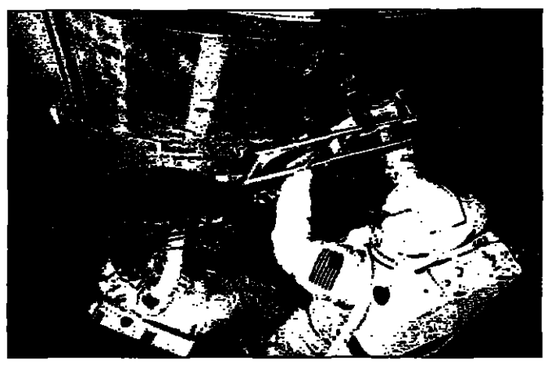
A jury in the trial of a father and two sons accused of murdering wife and mother Eve Howells were sent home overnight last night after failing to reach verdicts. The seven men and five women will resume deliberations tomorrow at Leeds Crown Court, where they spent six hours considering the case today.

David Howells, 48, and sons Glenn, 17, and John, 16, plead not guilty to murdering Mrs Howells, 48, at the family's home in Dalton Green Lane, Huddersfield, West Yorkshire, in August 1995. Glenn admits the manslaughter of his mother on the grounds of provocation. He claims he bludgeoned her to death in their living room after suffering years of mental and physical cruelty.

Missing teenager found safe

A missing anorexic teenager, Jackie Hooker, was found safe, police said yesterday. She was found in Brixton, south London, said Thames Valley Police. The news came after Colin and Lynne Hooker made an emotional appeal for the 16-year-old, who weighs just 4st 8lb, to make contact with them.

Mission to repair Hubble telescope



Astronauts are to make a series of space repairs to the Hubble Space Telescope (HST) over the next week, to enhance its stunning astronomical capabilities even further.

The Space Shuttle was due to take off yesterday on its way to the second repair mission for the HST, first launched in 1990. The astronauts on board will carry out at least four spacewalks in order to replace some of the older observation instruments and install state-of-the-art systems that will give even better views of the origins of the universe. They have been training for the mission for two years, carrying out the work on full-sized underwater mock-ups (above), to simulate the weightlessness of space. **Charles Arthur**

Pop singer Brian Connolly dead

Brian Connolly, the once-hard-living singer of 1970s glam rock band, The Sweet, died early today, aged 52, a friend disclosed.

Connolly, whose hits included *Blockbuster, Ballroom Blitz* and *Wig Wam Bam*, died of renal failure in hospital in Slough with his friends and family around him.

The blond singer had a string of heart-attacks behind him, which started in 1981. He suffered the last in January this year, discharged himself from hospital after a week, but was re-admitted a week later for the last time. **Obituary, page 16**

Poor deal for low-income savers

Low-income savers get a poor deal from financial institutions they entrust with their money, according to a report published yesterday by the National Consumer Council. The NCC believes that the closure of bank and building society branches, plus local post offices, all whittle away at effective consumer choice.

The report makes 20 suggestions to improve matters, including a call for banks to attract more young customers; for National Savings, the government agency, to provide cheap pensions; and for more education about financial matters. **Nic Cicutti**

THE INDEPENDENT ABROAD

Austria	Sch40	N'lands	Fl5.00
Belgium	BFr60	Italy	L4,500
Canaries	Pts300	Madeira	Esc325
Cyprus	C£1.20	Malta	43 cents
Denmark	DKr18	Norway	NKr20
Irish Rep	45p	Portugal	Esc325
France	Fr14	Spain	Pts300
Germany	DM4.5	Sweden	SKr21
Greece	Dr450	Switzerland	SFr4.00
Luxembourg	LF60	USA	$3.00

OVERSEAS SUBSCRIPTIONS

Air mail, 13 weeks: Europe £110.76; Zone 1 (Middle East, America, Africa and India) £184.06. Zone 2 (Far East and Australasia) £206.70. To order, please send cheque payable to Johnsons International Media Services Ltd to 43 Milharbour, London E14 9TR or telephone 0171-538 8268. Credit cards welcome.

BACK ISSUES

Back issues of the Independent are available from: Historic Newspapers, telephone 01988 840370.

people

Piano man: A personal favourite of Governor Chris Patten, Elton will be top of the bill in June

Elton to perform as the sun goes down on British rule

The magic combination of Elton John, Hong Kong's Urban Services Department and the fulfilment of the second Convention of Peking are coming together in June for celebrations to mark the handover of power in the colony. Elton is the first internationally famous star to have been firmly booked by the Urban Services Department for one of the concerts which will celebrate the transfer of power.

Practically every other famous name in the music world has been mentioned as a potential performer for a handover concert. However, those organising these events have been curiously slow off the mark and are having difficulties booking real superstars at relatively short notice.

But Elton has confirmed. "He is coming to Hong Kong on the last weekend of the handover," Peter Randall, head of public relations at the Hong Kong Tourist Association, said yesterday

Organisers said they hoped 40,000 people would pack Hong Kong stadium for each of the shows on 28 and 29 June. Thousands of tourists are expected, and – with many hotel rooms already taken by journalists, officials and diplomats, it is likely to be one of the biggest parties in the world this year.

The explanation for Elton John's presence seems to lie in the personal preferences of Hong Kong's Governor, Chris Patten, an avid music lover, is said to be a big fan. He invited Elton to lunch at Government House in 1993.

Elton's songs are extremely popular in China, though he has had less luck with plans to perform on the other side of the border. Authorities in Peking are said to have objected several years ago when the idea was mooted of an Elton John concert within the walls of the imperial Forbidden City in Peking.

Hong Kong plans to spend HK$233 million (£18m) on glitzy ceremonies to mark the handover. The Black Watch will be in attendance, to lend the appropriate note of post-imperial grandeur.

The Union Flag will be lowered for the last time in Hong Kong at midnight on 30 June, marking the end of more than a century and a half of colonial rule. China's red flag will then be hoisted.

Perhaps the most apt number for Elton to perform, given the nervousness amongst the HK population, would be an old concert favourite – "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me".

Stephen Vines

Leader elevated, Page 15

West End actors banned by US Equity

Janet McTeer's acclaimed West End portrayal of Nora in Ibsen's *A Doll's House* may now not be seen in New York after a fierce row broke out between the play's British producers and American Equity.

The US actors' union has banned three of Miss McTeer's co-stars, Owen Teale, John Carlisle and Peter Gowan, saying the parts could be played by American actors. Miss McTeer (right) has been granted permission to act on Broadway. Both Miss McTeer and Owen Teale have been nominated for Olivier Awards for their performances.

The show's producer, Thelma Holt, said there was no way she could let the production transfer without the three performers in question.

She added: "One of the reasons we have been given is that it's not an English play so you don't need English actors. How ridiculous." Fellow West End producer Bill Kenwright, who was set to spend $1m taking the production to New York, said: "It's a mind-blowing decision. I thought they would welcome us with open arms."

Mr Kenwright will be appealing to American Equity. He had already made an application for an exchange procedure, by which he would bring three American actors into a London production. ***David Lister***

Liam and Patsy call off their big day

Liam Gallagher and Patsy Kensit (right) yesterday failed to tie the knot, despite having more than 100 guests, albeit uninvited ones, in attendance at three different London venues and their St John's Wood home.

The Oasis singer and his girlfriend, who had obtained special licences for six separate locations, instead issued a statement saying that "obsessive and intrusive media attention had removed any dignity "from what was to be a private and special occasion".

Not since Miss Kensit last got married has so much press attention been generated by so little. Reporters and cameramen were deployed across the capital in the hope that they would hit on the correct venue.

Press attention was particularly intense at 30 Pavilion Road, an exclusive Knightsbridge restaurant and odds-on favourite for a combined ceremony and reception. The uninvited passed the day leaning on redundant police barriers, while photographers with long lenses cat-called at each other from the roofs of nearby office blocks.

While fans were disappointed, one freelance photographer went home happy. He was being paid £100 per day by eight newspapers to be on standby, and had made £800 by doing nothing. "I hope they do it again tomorrow," he said. ***Jojo Moyes***

briefing

TRANSPORT

New traffic laws for Britain in EU drive to cut deaths

Britain will have to bring in new road safety measures if the target of halving car deaths in Europe by the year 2010 is confirmed, according to an EU report. Member states need to standardise speed limits, reduce legally acceptable levels of alcohol for drivers, increase seat-belt use and modify car design, said the European Transport Safety Council.

In an influential proposal to the EU, the ETSC called for the introduction of a strategic road safety plan to cut fatalities. Many of the measures are likely to be brought in by the Dutch presidency, which is putting forward a package of road safety policies before the summer. The plan could mean new laws for Britain, despite its position as top of Europe's road safety league.

The ETSC report called for the EU to aim for 95 per cent of drivers to use seat belts, saving 7,000 lives a year, and for road standards to be harmonised across Europe. Motorists driving on the Trans-European Road Network – the motorway which will link Europe – would have to travel at under 75mph.

SOCIETY

Accent on Scotland

A Scottish accent is the nation's favourite, according to a poll conducted by Cellnet, the mobile telephone network. Eighteen per cent of people found a Scots accent the most appealing. But when asked whose telephone voice was the most trustworthy, nearly half voted for the traditional English counties accent.

The poll, carried out among 993 adults, also showed that the actor Sean Connery was the people's choice for the perfect voice. Joanna Lumley and Anthea Turner tied in second place. David Garfinkel

ECONOMICS

Clarke's pay crusade fails

Kenneth Clarke has failed in his 10-year mission to revolutionise the way Britons reward themselves for work, according to a study published today. In a speech on 11 February 1987, Mr Clarke, then Secretary of State for Employment, called for the elimination of five deadly sins: the annual pay round, the going rate, "comparability", job evaluation and – perhaps worst of all – national pay bargaining.

A decade later, all five still have a major role to play in wage determination, research group Incomes Data Services observes. National bargaining has been retained in a number of industries. National pay rates still exist at the banks, the big supermarket chains and companies such as Ford, Vauxhall and McDonald's.

So far as "comparability" is concerned, the vast majority of people still get an annual pay rise reflecting what is happening elsewhere – whether through inflation or what is being paid by competitors. **Barrie Clement**

HEALTH

Hip replacements a waste of cash

Unreliable hip replacements are not lasting long enough, causing pain and wasting money, according to the Consumers Association. Only the oldest and cheapest models – a handful of the 60 models on the market – last for a worthwhile length of time.

Operations to replace failed implants now made up about 11 per cent of all hip replacements in Britain, and some experts predict this figure could soon rise to 25 per cent. These "revision" operations are more complicated, more expensive and have a poorer success rate than the initial replacements, the *Health Which?* research found.

More than half the models on the market had been introduced since 1990, but only the oldest and cheapest implants had enough long-term evidence to support their use, it argued. However Health Which? claims the latest models made more money for manufacturers who were keen on them being used by as many surgeons as possible. Glenda Cooper

WHITEHALL

Top civil service posts vacant

Six high-ranking civil service posts were left vacant last year because departments were unable to find suitable candidates to fill them. An annex to last week's review body report on "senior salaries" says that, following open competition for 67 senior Whitehall vacancies in the year to June 1996, no appointment was made in six cases "either because there was no appropriate candidate or because suitable candidates had declined offers".

The Civil Service Commissioners told the review body that increased pay flexibility had helped recruitment generally, but "it was still difficult to attract top quality candidates ... in particular from the private sector." In the most senior ranks, women still found it difficult to break through Whitehall's glass ceiling. For vacancies in the top three grades: "women represented 13 per cent of applicants, 8 per cent of those short-listed for interview, and 10 per cent of those successful."

Nineteenth Report on Senior Salaries. Review Body on Senior Salaries. Volume 1 Cm3540. HMSO, £7.20. **Anthony Bevins**

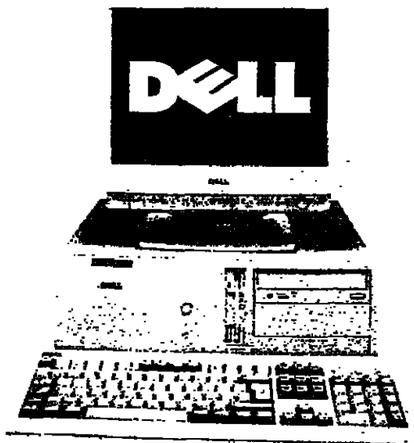
NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 41.2% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the first half of 1996

Better Spec. Better Price. Better Hurry.

DELL DIMENSION XPS M166s
- INTEL® 166MHz PENTIUM® PROCESSOR WITH MMX™ TECHNOLOGY
- 16Mb SDRAM
- 512Kb CACHE
- 3Gb EIDE HARD DRIVE
- STB POWERGRAPH 64 3D PCI GRAPHICS CARD WITH 2Mb VIDEO MEMORY
- 15" COLOUR SVGA MONITOR (13.75" VIEWABLE AREA)
- TWELVE SPEED CD-ROM DRIVE
- MID-SIZED DESKTOP CHASSIS
- INTEGRATED 16-BIT SOUND
- WINDOWS 95 & MICROSOFT OFFICE PROFESSIONAL 95

£1,199 (£1,438.20 incl. delivery & VAT)



MMX intel inside pentium

With Dell, things just get better and better. For only £1,199 (£1,438.20 inc. del. & VAT), we're offering a Dell Dimension™ XPS M166s with a Pentium® Processor with MMX™ technology. Because it comes with MMX technology it can run between 10% and 20% faster under today's normal business applications. It also includes a powerful 12 Speed CD-ROM Drive and a 3Gb Hard Drive. And we're giving you additional upgrades at outstanding prices (see below to upgrade this system further). But you must hurry. Call the world's leading direct PC manufacturer* today on 01344 724854 for a much better deal all round.

*Source IDC

Upgrade Options	Special Price for this Dimension XPS M166s bundle only
Add an additional 16Mb RAM and an upgrade to ACS290 speakers	Only £100 (£117.50 inc. VAT)
Add a 33.6 Internal Modem	Only £99 (£116.33 inc. VAT)

(CALL NOW FOR DETAILS OF OFFICE 97 UPGRADES.)

DELL®

TALK DIRECT TO THE NUMBER ONE.

01344 724854

Between 8am and 8pm weekdays, 10am to 4pm Sat.

Dell and the Dell logo are registered trademarks and Dell Dimension is a trademark of Dell Computer Corporation. The Intel Inside logo and Pentium are registered trademarks and MMX is a trademark of Intel Corporation. Microsoft, Windows, Office Professional 95 and the Windows logo are registered trademarks of the Microsoft Corporation. Delivery at £25 (£29.37 incl VAT) per system. Finance is available subject to status. Full details available on request. Prices correct at date of publication. The photographed product may not always match the specifications in this advert. Prices quoted refer to specification descriptions only. The prices listed reflect the information available at the time of going to press. Prices change frequently. All prices and specifications are subject to change without prior notice or obligation. Offer supplied with Windows 95 or as requested. Windows 3.11 (Office Pro 4.3). Dell mouse and keyboard included. Dell Computer Corporation Ltd, Milbanke House, Western Road, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 1RD. Offer available for a limited period only.

هكذا من الاصل

The nanny facing a murder charge

Baby of nine months dies after shaking

David Usborne
New York

Prosecutors in Massachusetts were expected last night to bring murder charges against the 18-year-old British nanny Louise Woodward, following the death from "shaken-baby syndrome" of a nine-month-old infant who had been in her care.

A spokeswoman for the Children's Hospital in Boston confirmed that the child, Matthew Eatten, died shortly after 11 pm on Sunday evening from injuries to the brain. The official cause of death was cited as "intracranial haemorrhage" or bleeding in the brain.

Ms Woodward, who enrolled with a nanny agency in the Boston area last June, had been working for the Eatten family since November. She arrived in the United States from her family home in Chester.

> ‘There was nothing that would give us any idea that she would harm the baby or anyone else's child’

The drama will rekindle debate in the US about the wisdom of leaving children in the care of strangers as dramatised in the chilling hit film *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle:*

This real-life tragedy began last Tuesday when Ms Woodward telephoned the emergency services from the Eatten home asking for help and saying that Matthew was injured and had stopped breathing.

Suspicion that the child's condition had been induced by shaking was aroused on his admission to the hospital. Doctors found that his eyes were bulging, a common symptom of shaken-baby syndrome. They confirmed that the brain had been traumatised by repeated smashing against the side of the skull.

Police later said that the teenager told them that she had treated Matthew roughly in the family bathroom and had shaken him later because he had become fussy and she had become frustrated and lost her patience.

Matthew was kept alive on life support from the moment of his admission last Tuesday until his death on Sunday.

Ms Woodward was jailed last week on initial charges of assault and battery. Bail was set at $100,000. Her father, Gary Woodward, a Chester builder, has flown to Boston but has not been able to raise the bail money. The bail, however is likely to be set higher, if murder charges are pressed.

In announcing the initial charges, prosecutors made it clear that they would be replaced by murder charges if the boy was to die. After a court hearing in Boston on Friday, Assistant District Attorney Lynn Rooney told reporters: "If the baby should not survive, the Commonwealth [of Massachusetts] will seek a murder indictment".

The parents of Matthew are both doctors in Boston. Sunil Eatten, 30, is an anaesthesiologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital. His wife, Deborah, 31, is an ophthalmologist. They also have an older son, Brendan, who was also in Ms Woodward's care.

In a brief statement issued on their behalf by the hospital, the couple said: "Matthew was a tremendous gift and joy to us, and he will forever be part of our lives".

In England, meanwhile, the mother of Louise, Sue Woodward, has been speaking out about her own distress over the child's death. "Yesterday all the news had been positive because we hadn't heard anything about Matthew's condition", she told the Press Association yesterday.

"That is all we were praying for," Mrs Woodward added. "I can't imagine how his parents must feel. I have already lost my daughter – but I have at least got the hope of getting her back".

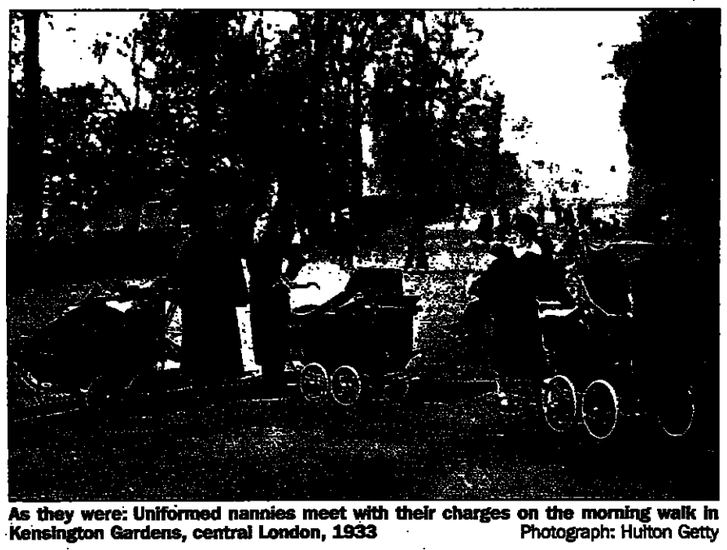
Ms Woodward would normally face a trial in Massachusetts and could be imprisoned for life if found guilty. Her own life is not in peril, however, because the state, unlike a majority in the US, does not prtactise capital punishment.

The teenager was referred to the Eattens by a nanny agency based in Cambridge, just outside Boston, called EF Au Pair. Until November she had been working in the home of Harris Komishane in another Massachusetts town, Manchester-by-the-Sea. She left the first family after arguments about when she should be expected to come home in the evenings.

Mr Komishane stressed, however, that he never had any concerns about his family's welfare in Ms Woodward's hands. "There was nothing that would give us any idea that she would do anything to harm the baby or anyone elses' child," he said.

Sue Woodward similarly expressed bafflement over what could have triggered such an assault against Matthew by her daughter. "Louise isn't the sour-faced person in the papers," she insisted. "She loved life and she loved people. Out of all of us she had the nicest nature. If there was someone that irritated her and wasn't very nice she would be kind to them and try tofind out why people didn't like them."

Louise Woodward (right) talks with her attorney Maria Galvagna in court in Boston last Thursday during her arraignment for assault on a child who has since died



As they were: Uniformed nannies meet with their charges on the morning walk in Kensington Gardens, central London, 1933 Photograph: Hulton Getty

What to check when hiring a nanny

Five tips from Dr Charlie Lewis, an expert in parenting, at Lancaster University's Psychology Department

- Get as many character references as you can.
- Get the candidates to play with the child and watch the interaction. Do they really like children?
- Find out what they want from the job. Is it incompatible with your needs?
- Insist on a trial period.
- Don't expect that you sign off when you are not present. Discuss support systems they have in your absence.

The common sense that parents must rely on

Paul Vallely

The parents of Matthew Eappen made an assumption which so many parents routinely make: that an 18-year-old young woman would naturally possess the skills to cope with looking after their nine-month-old baby.

Had the au pair from England been male they might have asked more questions. But political correctness has not yet seriously affected the messages Western culture predisposes parents to give to their daughters to prepare them for a role as carers. So the supposition goes unchallenged that a young woman of child-bearing age is unquestionably a fit person.

Perhaps Louise Woodward is. Only a court can now decide on that. But the supposition made by Mr and Mrs Eappen is worth examining.

When it comes to a nanny it is possible to ask for professional qualifications. With an after-school childminder the law sets rigorous standards. But for the au pair or the babysitter only the common sense of the parents stands between them and disaster.

Once that seemed enough. When a typical family contained three or four children its members picked up much about childcare by osmosis. Today, the family has downsized – 1.8 children is now the average. The days when elder daughters looked after their younger siblings have largely gone. So have the support systems provided by extended families. Today there is far more available in the way of expert advice – in handbooks and magazines – but it is a poor substitute close-up examples of parenting.

The state has made some attempt to compensate. Parenting skills are today part of the "personal, social and health education" component of the national curriculum. But most educational and child psychologists think the attention given to them is perfunctory.

The case against unnecessary intervention and regulation by the state no longer needs to be made. But the changing nature of the modern family suggests that concern by the state is not unnecessary.

Much research shows that, contrary to the prejudices of many adults, today's adolescents are more rather than less responsible than were previous generations. But it also shows that they feel they need more assistance at school on relationships and parenting, ethics and morals, health and drug risks.

It has always seemed ironic that the rigorous process of scrutiny applied to couples wanting to adopt a child has no natural correlative. Being a parent is perhaps the most profound activity which most school-leavers will ever undertake. It is also the one for which school leaves them least prepared.

Were that not so, young women like Louise Woodward would know that psychologists say most parents feel, if not murderous intent, at least powerfully negative feelings towards a ceaselessly screaming infant. They would also have learned something of the strategies and support systems to help them cope with it.

Calls grow for drug-test law

Charles Arthur
Science Editor

Another leading doctor has spoken out against random compulsory drugs-testing for workers, saying that it is "often unlawful" and does not protect the employee's rights, while presenting ethical problems for health care staff.

It also emerged that the UK lacks national guidelines for drugs-testing because the organisations which might have created them have been privatised, meaning that their views do not carry any official weight with private companies. Instead, standards set by the US government are used, in a haphazard fashion.

Dr Alexander Forrest, of the Royal Hallamshire Hospital in Sheffield, said that the lack of clear legislation in the UK could lead to abuse by employers during random testing of employees or job applicants for use of drugs such as heroin, cannabis, cocaine and alcohol.

"If workplace drug-screening is regarded by the employer as a non-medical issue, then the employee should have the same protection as .... in a criminal investigation," writes Dr Forrest in the *Journal of Medical Ethics*, published today. "Such protection may require new legislation."

His comments echo those of Dr John Honour, who in yesterday's *Independent* said: "There aren't any standards for positive tests or for how the tests should be done ... If you failed a pre-employment test you might not even hear – you'd just not get offered the job."

Dr Honour's knowledge of urine-testing and pharmacology helped clear the name of Diane Modahl, the athlete wrongly suspended in 1994 for taking drugs. But he is concerned that although drugs-testing is growing rapidly, there are no national standards.

A major testing laboratory yesterday told *The Independent* that the only standards currently used by drugs-testing laboratories are those set by the US National Institutes for Drug Abuse (NIDA).

The UK does not have any of its own because the only government organisations which might have set them – the National Physical Laboratory and the Laboratory of the Government Chemist (LGC) – have been privatised.

Most companies use some form of the NIDA standards. But those are far from perfect.

"Basically, when these were introduced in the 1980s in the US, they set them as low as their testing equipment could manage," said Mr Walker.

However, that is sometimes too sensitive. Laboratories are aware that their tests can give a positive result for opiates if someone eats a bagel covered with poppy seeds.

JUST WHAT YOU'D EXPECT FROM YOUR USUAL HOTEL.

JUST WHAT YOU WOULDN'T.

For the facilities of a quality hotel at around half the price, switch to Travelodge.

We offer unbeatable convenience, with over 160 roadside locations nationwide and easy booking through one central reservation line.

You pay on arrival, so when it comes to leaving, simply drop your key off at reception. No queues, no delays.

And, as you pay per room instead of per person, up to 4 people can enjoy a weekend leisure break from less than £9 each per night.†

Call Travelodge Roomline now, we're sure we'll exceed your expectations.

Travelodge

NO.1 NATIONWIDE IN OVER 160 LOCATIONS

CALL TRAVELODGE ROOMLINE FREE ON:

0800 850 950

Quoting P135E

†Prices start from £34.95 per room per night, and vary depending on location. *Except at Travelodges on Welcome Break Service Areas. **In the same, or an adjacent building. ***Not available at Nuneaton Bedworth, Dudley, Battersea, Birmingham Central & Binfield Bracknell

The Internet will launch your business into the 21st Century. BT can help you get there.

The Internet Revolution.

The Internet is the fastest growing communications medium ever. There are already 60 million users and it's predicted by the year 2002 over 200 million people worldwide will be connected. It's also estimated that by 2005, 7.5% of consumer spend will be made through the Internet. That's why it should be an integral part of your business.

A supplier you can trust.

To take full advantage of this opportunity, you need a supplier you know you can rely on. One who can guide you through the fast-changing Internet world and the implications this will have for your business. A partner who will ensure you have the right solution for your business needs. That partner is BT. We're already one of the largest global communications companies in the world and aim to stay that way by dedicating the resources to lead Internet communications into the future. To achieve this, we're developing a whole new Internet infrastructure, laying down motorways in cyberspace that bypass the clutter and delays, so speed, reliability and security can be guaranteed.

A wide range of Internet services.

By pioneering the leading technology, BT can offer all the Internet services needed to launch your business into the 21st century.

BT Internet **– easy and fast dial-up Internet access for e-mail, World Wide Web and UseNet news.**

BTnet **– high speed, resilient access for businesses needing permanent connection to the Internet.**

Concert InternetPlus **– BT's dedicated highway through the global Internet for 'business class' levels of service.**

BT Web World **– let BT manage your Web site, so you can concentrate on managing your business.**

BT's Intranet Solutions **– generating real business advantage by securely extending your company information to employees, suppliers or customers.**

BT Network for Lotus Notes **– complementing Intranets by full information sharing and workflow automation, without the headaches of expensive infrastructure.**

What to do next.

Details of BT's Internet and multimedia services can be found on our Web site: http://www.bt.com/internet

Alternatively, call us on **Free*fone 0800* 800 872** and begin counting down to a much better way of working.

INTERNET AND MULTIMEDIA SERVICES

Free*fone 0800* 800 872

THE CONCERT™ JOINT VENTURE REPRESENTS THE COMBINED BT RENGTHS OF BT AND MCI. CONCERT IS THE TRADEMARK OF CONCERT COMMUNICATIONS COMPANY. LOTUS NOTES IS A TRADEMARK OF LOTUS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

هكذا من الاصل

Four
sus
at A

Andy Cooper

IRA b
could
caused
loss of

Fourth person suspended at Ashworth

Glenda Cooper
Social Affairs Correspondent

A senior psychiatrist has become the fourth member of staff to be suspended at Ashworth Hospital on Merseyside, after the discovery of pornography and alleged paedophile activity. It follows the suspension of its chief executive, Janice Miles, and two nurses last Friday, when the Department of Health ordered an immediate inquiry into "extremely serious" allegations concerning the Personality Disorder Unit, including claims of drug and alcohol misuse and financial irregularity.

New, stringent measures were announced by the acting chief executive, Erville Millar, who denied the hospital was "out of control" and said yesterday's suspension did not imply guilt but was made in the doctor's best interests.

"This hospital is not out of control. It is very much in control and it is very clear what it is trying to do and what it is trying to investigate," he said.

Ward-based visiting by children has been banned throughout the hospital, as have visits to the hospital by ex-patients. Mr Millar confirmed that any videos brought in for patients would be vetted by staff, as was normal procedure, and any gifts and packages brought in for patients were also searched.

He confirmed a computer and a modem had been removed from a ward and patients from Lawrence Ward had been relocated in the hospital, with concerns for their safety in mind.

The Secretary of State for Health,, Stephen Dorrell, told the Commons yesterday that the inquiry, headed by retired circuit judge Peter Fallon QC, would report within the year. Its report will be made public.

The action was taken after Alice Mahon, Labour MP for Halifax, gave ministers a 60-page dossier compiled by a former Ashworth patient, Stephen Daggett, who absconded from the hospital for 10 days last year.

Mahon: Prompted inquiry

The hospital, whose most famous inmate is the Moors murderer Ian Brady, had not passed on the information to the Department of Health - even after a "substantial" amount of pornography had been discovered in the Personality Disorder Unit - and continued to maintain that press reports were "unfounded".

Mr Daggett said large quantities of pornographic videos were found on the premises and some patients were able to amass large sums in their bank accounts by copying and selling tapes.

He also said he had concerns that a young girl was being put at risk by being brought into the ward, including the claim that she was left unsupervised with a sex offender.

In his statement, Mr Dorrell said that on Friday he had instituted "urgent action to address the very serious situation which had been brought to my attention in the previous few days".

"The public is entitled to reassurance on two counts," said Mr Dorrell. "Firstly, Ashworth Hospital must be properly managed and must provide a high level of security for the benefit both of patients and of the public at large.

Secondly, the hospital must also ensure that its patients receive a high standard of clinical care. The action that I announced on Friday is directed at the achievement of both these objectives."

Tessa Jowell, shadow health minister, said the revelations exposed "the dreadful inadequacy of the monitoring systems which are supposed to ensure safety at high-security hospitals". "The revelations are shocking," she said. "But as disturbing is the fact that this alleged trade in pornography and paedophile activity could have gone on undiscovered in a hospital that has already been subject to a recent fundamental and far-reaching inquiry under the chairmanship of Sir Louis Blom-Cooper.

She said the inquiry must address "the chronic shortage of staff" at the hospital unit and said the "gagging of staff" by the Government had made it more difficult to bring to light such allegations.

Stormy weather: Gale force winds lashing Blackpool pier and tower yesterday. The strong waves, some 80ft high, breached the town's sea defences, forcing the closure of Blackpool's famous promenade to all traffic and trams
Photograph: John Gladwin

IRA bomb could have caused huge loss of life

A massive IRA bomb defused by army experts in Ulster last night would have caused widespread death and destruction, security forces said.

The 1,000lb device was left fully primed on a building site in Strabane, Co Tyrone, yards from a hotel packed with 250 guests. Police believe it was intended for a passing RUC patrol, but would have caused huge civilian loss of life if it had exploded.

The bomb attempt comes days after the IRA said it was not involved in a "phoney war" and that there was little hope of a ceasefire before a general election.

It is the latest in a spate of murder bids on police and troops in the past week and further confirms fears that the IRA's campaign of terror has escalated.

Yesterday's bomb was discovered on a building site on the main Omagh Road within 50 metres of the Fir Trees Hotel after a warning call from the IRA.

The hotel, 26 homes and nearby factories were all evacuated. Superintendent Mervyn Hood of the Royal Ulster Constabulary said: "This was certainly no phoney attack. it was designed deliberately to kill and maim security forces and anyone who got in their way."

He said the device contained between 1000lb and 1500lb of explosives held in three 45 gallon drums with a firing pack and command wires attached.

Hours before yesterday's discovery a police officer was slightly injured when an explosive device was thrown at a patrol in the Co Tyrone village of Pomeroy, an attack described by the RUC as "murderous". In the past week there have also been attacks on police vehicles in Dungannon, Co Tyrone and Lurgan, Co Armagh.

The chairman of Strabane District Council, Edward Turner said he would now have no choice but to advise business people against future investment in the area. "We've had something in excess of 500 bombs here over the years," he said.

In London, security around the House of Commons was noticeably tightened as Downing Street rejected an appeal by Gerry Adams in a fax to John Major for the Prime Minister to authorise official talks with Sinn Fein to "kickstart" the stalled peace process. The Prime Minister's office said it was "hypocritical" of the Sinn Fein president to call for talks with the Government while the IRA was planting bombs and planning terrorist attacks.

The hostile response from Number Ten underlined the anger among ministers at the IRA's warning last week that there would be no renewal of the ceasefire before the election.

"The UK Government is not going to authorise anyone to have discussions with Sinn Fein in the absence of a ceasefire. It is hypocritical to talk about peace when bombs are being planted in Northern Ireland and possibly elsewhere – who knows?" said a Downing Street spokesman.

Andrew Hunter, chairman of the Northern Ireland committee of backbench Tory MPs, said it was up to Sinn Fein to make the first move. But he added: "Dialogue has to be meaningful and based upon an unequivocal restoration of the ceasefire and there is nothing to talk about while the Provisionals are still intent on ... violence."

A Sinn Fein spokesman said: "John Major has said he has new ideas for the peace process, but he wants to leave them until after the election. We would prefer to bridge this gap now rather than have a vacuum for 12 weeks until the election is over."

If anyone else offers you so much for so little there's a catch.

Was £1,399+VAT
(£1,644)

Armada 1130
Intel Pentium® 120-MHz processor
1 GB hard drive
16-MB memory
10.4" CSTN screen.

We're increasing the value and reducing the prices on all our Armada notebooks.

In fact, the whole range has large price reductions of up to 23%. This means Compaq quality notebooks are now even more affordable.

And that includes the highly practical, really easy to use Armada 1130, with 120-MHz Pentium processor. What's more, all this comes from the world's leading PC company.

For more information contact your reseller or for a brochure pack send off the coupon or call us between 8.30am and 8pm (9am-5pm at weekends.)

Tel: 0990 50 00 20

Mr/Mrs/Ms/Initials _____ Surname _____
Title _____
Company _____
Address _____
Postcode _____ Telephone _____
Are your PCs networked? ____ No. of employees at your place of work ____

intel inside pentium® PROCESSOR

COMPAQ COSTS SOME LESS THAN CHEAPER COMPUTERS

COMPAQ

Prices quoted are UK Typical Buying Prices (TBP). Actual savings may vary. Photograph shows Armada 1120T with 10.4" TFT display. Price quoted refers to specification descriptions only.
The Intel Inside logo and Pentium are registered trademarks of Intel Corporation.

Dorrell set for a climbdown over NHS Bill

Colin Brown
Chief Political Correspondent

A retreat on the NHS Primary Care Bill is expected to be signalled today by Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health, to avoid a row with family doctors over "supermarket surgeries" spoiling the Tories' general election campaign.

Mr Dorrell privately has assured the doctors' leaders that an amendment will be made to the Bill during the committee stage to make it clear that supermarket chains will not be able to hire GPs, although pilots may be allowed for supermarkets to open surgeries with GPs as their tenants.

Labour will reinforce its opposition to the "supermarket clause" by forcing a vote tonight against the second reading of the Bill. The Labour motion says the proposal to allow private companies to hire GPs would undermine the doctor-patient relationship and "pave the way for privatisation of the NHS".

Mr Dorrell agreed to revise the clause after the British Medical Association warned that it would ask GPs to make the proposal for "supermarket surgeries" an election issue. Among stores which have expressed an interest are Asda, and Unichem, the chemist chain.

The move by Mr Dorrell to silence the criticism comes as the Government is gearing up for the election with a series of economic statistics – including the labour market figures tomorrow and the retail price index on Thursday – which are expected to show continued economic recovery.

Downing Street said a "belting set of industry pricing figures" showed record lows demonstrated the "very low inflation pressures in the economy", a clear sign that John Major is supporting the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, in resisting the pressure by Eddie George, the Governor of the Bank of England, for an increase in interest rates.

Eddie George: Pressure for an increase in interest rates

Mr Clarke caused a renewed flurry of speculation about the election date when he told a conference of newspaper editors in London: "We're bound to get one called in the next few weeks."

The Prime Minister must call an election by 22 May and although he is known to favour hanging on until 1 May – the date of the local elections – there was speculation that next week, he might cancel the Wirral South by-election on 27 February to hold an election on 20 March or 10 April.

Defending Britain's rejection of the European social chapter, William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said an extra 33 million Europeans could be in work if the Continent matched the job-creating record of the United States.

In a keynote speech to the Social Market Foundation in London, Mr Waldegrave urged Europe to adopt an American-style flexible labour market.

He rounded on Britain's European Union partners for creating the European social chapter on workers' rights, and for burdening employers with high levels of protection for staff.

Mr Major is expected to give a boost to the Tories' election campaign on education at a press conference in London today. Government sources said the Prime Minister would be highlighting nursery education – one of the key battlegrounds for the election.

The Government is to expand nationally from 1 April the offer of £1,100 voucher for every four-year-old to pay for nursery care in the public, private or voluntary sector.

Meeting of continents: John Major extolling the merits of Britain as the best place to do business at the Latin America trade conference in London yesterday, which was attended by the presidents of Peru, Brazil and Panama Photograph: Russell Boyce/Reuters

Role-play to give women that vital push for Parliament

Fran Abrams
Political Correspondent

Aspiring Labour MPs could find themselves role-playing advice surgeries or showing their talent "on the stump" under plans aimed at putting more women into Parliament.

Plans to introduce a variety of new tests for selection applicants are being considered by a committee set up to find a replacement for all-women shortlists, which were declared illegal last year.

The group, which is expected to report to the party next month, may also suggest replacing the controversial all-women lists with a quota system under which shortlists would have to be at least 50 per cent female. A third reform under consideration is a central "approved" list of candidates like the one already run by the Conservatives.

The idea of role-play is designed to make selection procedures more women-friendly.

Party sources say that many women fail to push themselves forward under the existing selection procedures, in which candidates are questioned in crowded meeting rooms. They add that some candidates who impress members with their platform skills turn out to be hopeless on the doorstep or when dealing with constituents.

"You could select someone who has made a brilliant speech and then when you get them out on the campaign trail they are no good at all," one MP said.

All-women shortlists were outlawed last January by an industrial tribunal in Leeds after two male members complained that they were being discriminated against. Since then the proportion of women selected for winnable seats has plummeted. Labour's overseas-aid spokeswoman, Clare Short, pointed out recently that she was one of only 187 women MPs ever elected to Parliament.

The policy had already had some effect, and is likely to boost the number of women MPs to around 90 out of 660. However, this will still be very low in comparison to other countries such as Germany, where around a quarter of MPs are women. There, the Social Democrats operate a quota system.

Mary-Ann Stephenson, campaigns officer for the Fawcett Society, which campaigns for more women in Parliament and public life, welcomed the proposals.

"This could make a difference. Widening the selection procedure so that it is not just about being able to make one big barn-storming speech at one meeting is quite important," she said.

She added that extra training for potential candidates could also help them to put their best feet forward.

"going to need helping hand"

You can count on us.
When you carry the American Express Card, you carry the assurance that virtually wherever you are in the world, you can have a cash advance couriered to you in an emergency and you can have the Card replaced within 24 hours. There is someone you can call to help you with things like obtaining an English-speaking lawyer or doctor; and we'll even send along prescription medicine or contact lenses if you've left them behind somewhere on your trip. We've designed these services and more with you in mind.
To find out how we can help you do more, call:
0800 700 767

AMERICAN EXPRESS Cards

American Express Services Europe Limited, Reg. Office, Portland House, 1 Stag Place, London SW1E 5BZ, Reg. No: 1833139. CHG3

Harman plans one-stop shops for unemployed

Colin Brown

Some social security offices will be sold off in a merger with High Street JobCentres, saving the taxpayer up to £100m, under plans by Harriet Harman, Labour's social security spokeswoman, to introduce "one-stop shops" for the unemployed.

The plans fit in with the "simpler and smarter" government promised yesterday by Tony Blair, the Labour leader, and Ms Harman claims they could transform help for the unemployed to get back into work with a saving for the taxpayer.

Ms Harman, who has yet to announce the details, estimates that there could be a saving of £50m a year on administration costs, with a one-off saving of £50m on the sale of unwanted social security offices or JobCentres. "It's not just about saving money. It's about improving the service to the customer."

Under the changes, which have the backing of Citizens' Advice Bureaux, which deal with the problems, claimants would be able to obtain help with their job search at the same time as they applied for their weekly benefits. The one-stop shops, using computer technology, could also advise on the availability of childcare facilities to enable mothers to seek work, and it could be used for the payment of housing benefit which is currently handled by local authorities. A tougher complaints procedure for customers would be introduced to reinforce the improvements.

"The starting point has to be refocused so that for people of working age, the emphasis will be on getting them off benefit and into work. You have to focus the service to getting smaller, but smarter, government," said Ms Harman.

It would end the duplication of queues, which Ms Harman found in Derby, where claimants have to queue for their benefit in one office, before going into the JobCentre next door to queue again for vacancies. That waste of time and resources, she believes, is repeated across Britain, and is hindering claimants from finding work. Streamlining the delivery of help for claimants and those seeking work could also help to cut fraud.

Blair at work on small businesses

Tony Blair is to make a concerted effort to portray Labour as the party of small business in the run-up to a general election with a series of initiatives aimed at highlighting the Tories' failings, **writes Fran Abrams.**

At the launch of Labour's latest campaign yesterday, the party's small-business spokeswoman said the present government had created more regulations than it had abolished, tying up companies in swathes of red tape.

Labour has promised to double the loans made to small technology firms under a government guarantee scheme in association with the banks and to have an annual parliamentary debate on small business. It also says it will give small firms a stronger voice on the Deregulation Taskforce and provide an internet site which can be used for training.

Next month the party will hold a forum with small-business men and women in London to discuss projects which might help to cut red tape.

In the next few months the shadow chancellor Gordon Brown, shadow president of the board of trade Margaret Beckett and small-business spokeswoman Barbara Roche will take part in meetings and discussions throughout the country to highlight the campaign.

DAVID Aaronovitch

Long quest for the simple answer

"Questions" in the House of Commons are not the same as questions elsewhere. Outside (doubtless a consequence of our education system), the word suggests something to which an "answer" might be forthcoming. This convention stops at St Stephen's entrance; after nearly two decades in power this lot of ministers have perfected all the other, less revealing, ways of dealing with the impertinences of implied criticism. For the first 10 years, of course, it was "when the honourable gentleman's party was in government, the country was five minutes away from insurrection and the blood of white Englishwomen ran red in the streets".

Today, some ministers do not trouble even to refer to the fact that a question has been asked, simply slagging off current Labour policy (or lack of it) by way of response.

One oasis in this desert, however, is transport questions. Here, as yesterday, the chosen technique is not abuse or evasion but extreme long-windedness. True, the replies invariably begin with an expression of astonishment and hurt that the hon. gent or lady opposite should be so ignorant of the facts, or unappreciative of heroic government efforts, as to ask such a hostile question. But then they set to and answer. And answer. And answer.

Take junior minister John Watts, who is capable of immense expatiation on the subject of planting trees next to motorways, and will always sacrifice an unnecessary joke in favour of a lengthy invitation for members to join him in a visit to said trees.

His colleague, John Bowis, is equally unfrivolous. He it was who fielded an enquiry from Michael Brown (Con, Brigg and Cleethorpes) concerning drivers falling asleep on the M180/A180. A study from Loughborough University had suggested that there was "clear evidence that if one travels in an easterly direction towards Grimsby, the road has certain conditions that cause drivers to go to sleep".

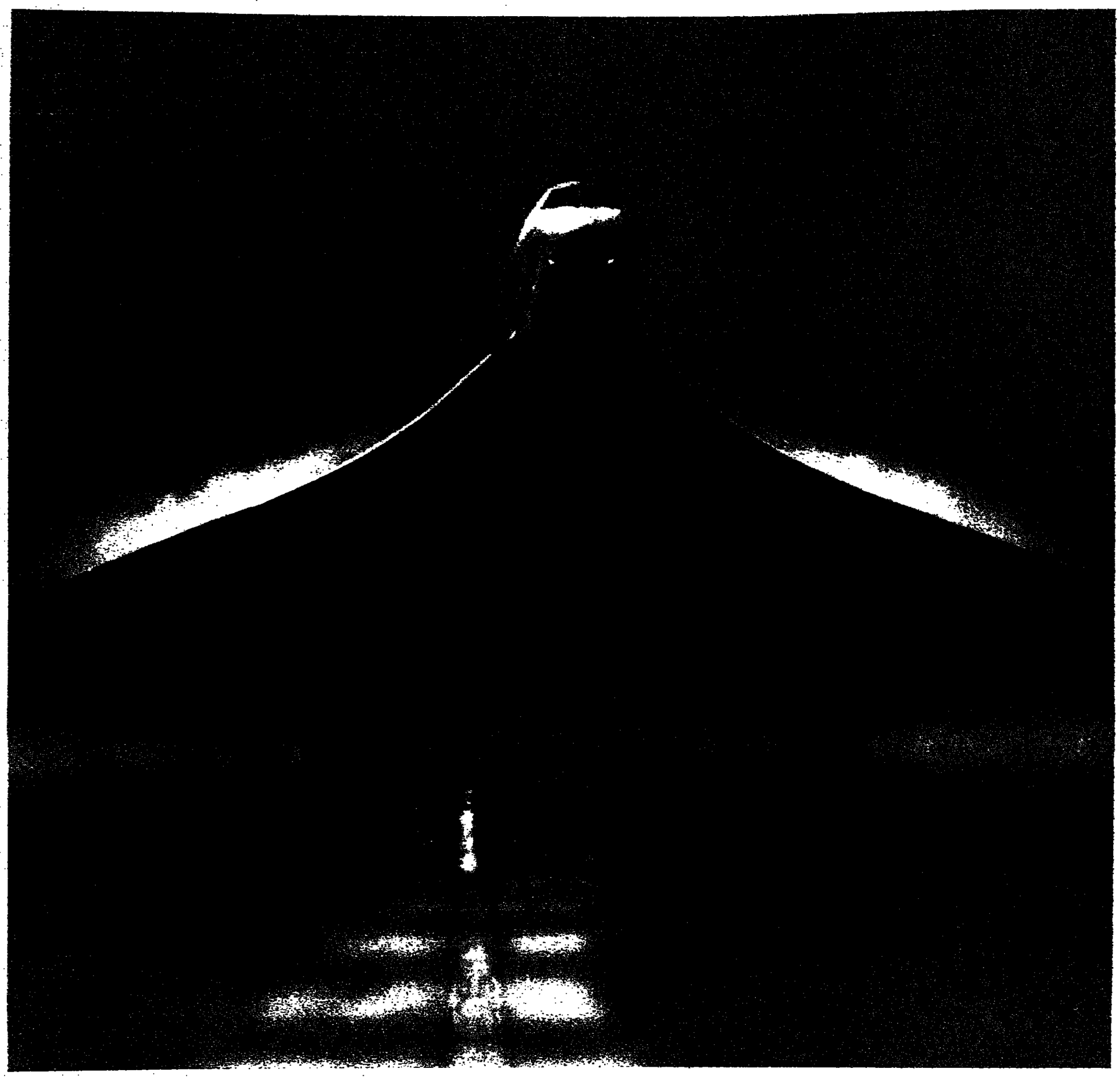
Mr Bowis leaned his substantial stomach against the dispatch box, and settled in for a long reply. In general, he told the House, accidents on that stretch of road were low (I half expected to discover that on the German A180 they were much higher, due to the Social Chapter), but there were indeed many incidents of driver fatigue. How could he explain this? Mr Bowis thoughtfully and seriously and slowly outlined all the conceivable options: lengthy journeys might account for it, he droned, as might road conditions, or - possibly - "drivers not observing the Highway Code". In other words, every factor that might explain any accident anywhere at any time. Personally, I am attracted to the idea that this stretch of road is (for some reason) frequented by acquaintances of Mr Bowis, who - recalling evenings spent with the great man - drift off into fatal reverie.

But hold on a second, you may say. How can you simultaneously complain about dismissive answers from the dispatch box, and over-long ones? And how would you respond to questions from the likes of the sententious Dr Robert Spink, drink-banning half-member from Castle Point? Dr Spink, resplendent in a double-breasted suit (though he barely musters a single breast himself), was asking Tony Newton (Leader of the House) about drugs policy. Would he not commend the efforts of SNAP, "which stands" (said Spink, proudly) "for Say No and Phone". I would have paid a year's salary had Newton suggested that Spink might usefully FOAD. "Which stands for ..."

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

To catch this offer you'll have to be faster than the speed of sound.



New York return for £10.

To celebrate 10 successful years since privatisation, we're selling 10 tickets on every Concorde flight from London to New York for the next 10 days for a special anniversary price of £10 return. Tickets go on sale at precisely 10pm tonight. Simply call 0345 222 111. God speed.

BRITISH AIRWAYS
The world's favourite airline

http://www.british-airways.com

1. The offer is open to everyone aged 18 or over excluding employees of British Airways, members of the families, their agents or anyone else professionally connected with the offer. 2. As soon as all the tickets are sold the offer will end. Callers after this time will be notified by telephone sales staff that the offer is closed. 3. Each ticket will cost £10 plus tax. 4. Successful callers can book a maximum of 2 return tickets at the £10 rate, subject to seat availability and the promotional tickets available each night. 5. Payment must be made by credit card and in full at the time of the booking. 6. Bookings can only be made by calling 0345 222 111 after 10pm on 11.2.97. 7. Offer applies to outbound flights from London to New York from the first flight on 12.2.97 to the afternoon flight on 21.2.97 and return travel on a Concorde flight which lands on or before 20.3.97. Seats cannot be pre-booked. 8. All flights are subject to availability. British Airways standard conditions of carriage apply (available on request). 9. There can be no refunds, passenger name changes or changes in flight times or dates once tickets have been booked. 10. Successful callers may combine this offer with other British Airways air travel. Any additional flights will not qualify for the normal discount add-on rate. This offer cannot be combined with any other promotion or special offer. No child, infant or agency discounts apply. 11. The offer is for flights only. No ground arrangements are included. Travellers must supply valid passports and visas and are solely responsible for any tax liability incurred as a result of this offer including airport passenger taxes. 12. British Airways reserves the right to make use of successful callers in any related publicity activity. 13. No cash alternative available. 14. Promoter: British Airways, Speedbird House, PO Box 10, Heathrow Airport, TW6 2JA. 15. The names and counties of the winners can be obtained after 28.2.97 by sending a SAE marked 'Results' to Concorde Offer, British Airways Telephone Sales, PO Box 10, Heathrow Airport, TW6 2JA. 16. Individuals can only win once

news

The justice system is racist, says mother

The mother of the murdered black teenager Stephen Lawrence broke down in court yesterday as she attacked a "racist" judicial system which had allowed her son's killers to cheat justice.

Speaking at the re-opened inquest into his death, at Southwark Coroner's Court in south-east London, Doreen Lawrence described the promising 18-year-old A-level student as "very friendly", "a quiet person" who was "loved by everyone".

But Mrs Lawrence, who saw three white men formally acquitted of her son's street stabbing murder after a private prosecution she brought folded last year, grew more angry as she added: "My son was murdered nearly four years ago. His killers are still walking the street."

She told the coroner, Sir Montague Levine: "When my son was murdered, the police saw my son as a criminal belonging to a gang. My son was stereotyped by the police. He was black, then he must be a criminal and they set about to investigate him and us.

"Their investigation lasted two weeks, that allowed vital evidence to be lost. My son's crime was that he was walking down the road looking out for a bus that would take him home. Our crime was living in a country where the justice system supports racist murders against innocent people. The value that this white racist country puts on black lives is evident to see since the killing of my son.

"In my opinion what happened in the crown court was staged, meaning it was decided long before we entered the courtroom what would happen, that the judge would not allow the evidence to be presented to the jury."

Seeking justice: Stephen Lawrence, who was killed in a racist attack nearly four years ago, and his mother Doreen

Mrs Lawrence's son was stabbed as he waited for a bus in Eltham, south-east London, in April 1993. The family's private prosecution – only the fourth to be brought in 150 years – came after the Crown Prosecution Service abandoned the case against two young men in July, 1993, because it believed there was insufficient evidence to secure a conviction.

Mrs Lawrence told the court she and her husband, Neville, searched for their son after a neighbour told them he had seen the attack. After failing to find him, the couple drove to the local hospital where staff refused to let them see him.

He died at 11.37pm – some 40 minutes after their arrival – of a haemorrhage due to stab wounds to the chest and arm.

Mrs Lawrence claimed police officers at the hospital failed to talk to the couple until the next morning. "No one told us anything at that stage," she said and accused officers of being "very patronising" towards her and dismissive of her information.

She said that when she first visited the police station, she tried to present an officer with a list of names of possible people involved. "He folded the paper and rolled it into a ball in his hand. I asked him if he was going to put it in a bin. At the time they were not taking my son's death as seriously as they should have done."

The coroner told the jury that the teenager had left a 150-yard trail of blood before collapsing unconscious and lost "an awful lot of blood" as he tried to flee.

The hearing continues.

Loophole in seat-belt law

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

Children's lives could be put at risk by cash-strapped local authorities and irresponsible coach companies exploiting loopholes in new legislation designed to make journeys to school safer, safety campaigners claimed yesterday.

The laws enforcing fitting of seat-belts in minibuses and coaches carrying three or more children came into force yesterday. The Government was forced to act after a series of accidents which included the November 1993 M40 minibus crash in which 12 children and their teacher were killed.

However, both safety campaigners and industry lobby groups said they were "concerned" about the new legislation. "There are certainly loopholes in the law for older coaches. We expect responsible operators to work within the spirit of the law," said Simon Posner, a spokesman for the Confederation of Passenger Transport, which lobbies for the coach industry.

Under the laws there is no requirement that seat-belts added to older vehicles have to be checked by experts. Last year, inspectors for Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (Rospa), found one company had used exhaust brackets to fit seat belts.

Experts also point out that although coaches have to fit seat-belts, no operator has to check children are wearing them. Rospa and the bus industry wants the Government to pay for "escorts" to ensure children are strapped in. The Department of Transport later said it would shortly produce proposals for inspecting the belts.

Another flaw in the laws means companies could avoid fitting belts by limiting the top speed of their vehicles and having them reclassified as buses.

Last week, *The Really Useful Show*, a BBC consumer programme, obtained a letter from a Welsh council advising bus operators about another loophole in the seat-belt rules. Denbighshire county council's head of highways and transportation told companies that "you can of course fit speed limits to existing vehicles, which will remove the requirement to fit seat-belts."

1 Call the TSB Mortgage

QUOTATION LINE.

2 Go hunt that house.

Find out what you can borrow, BEFORE hunting.
The call is free, the quote is free, so why not ring TSB PhoneBank for more information.

CALL FREE ref: INH1 0500 758 000

Mortgage Quotation Line

Calls to PhoneBank may be recorded and monitored. A TSB cheque account is required. Assignment/assignation of a suitable life policy may be required by the Bank as security. Applicants must be aged 18 or over. All loans subject to status. Not available in the Channel Islands. Written quotations are available on request by calling 0500 758 000. TSB Bank plc and TSB Bank Scotland plc are representatives of the TSB Marketing Group which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority only for TSB life insurance, pensions, unit trusts and offshore investments. Advice or recommendations relate only to the investments of the TSB Marketing Group. TSB Bank plc, Victoria House, Victoria Square, Birmingham B1 1BZ. Registered in England and Wales. Number: 1089268. TSB Bank Scotland plc, Henry Duncan House, 120 George Street, Edinburgh EH2 4LH. Registered in Scotland. Number: 95237.

YOUR HOME IS AT RISK IF YOU DO NOT KEEP UP REPAYMENTS ON A MORTGAGE OR OTHER LOAN SECURED ON IT.

Tuned in: Some of the 5,000 primary-school children from all over London who yesterday swarmed into the Royal Festival Hall for the Lollipop Proms, to play music from the whole sonic spectrum Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Inmates may be put in police cells

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

Britain's jails will begin overflowing next month, causing the Prison Service to resort to costly police cells unless controversial plans for a floating jail get the go-ahead, Richard Tilt, the director-general, warned yesterday.

Speaking at the service's annual conference in Manchester, Mr Tilt said the population of the 135 establishments in England and Wales was likely to reach about 60,000 by next month, exceeding their total capacity. But Weymouth and Portland borough councils voted last week to oppose plans to moor the prison ship *Resolution* in Portland Harbour, Dorset. Without the ship, Mr Tilt warned: "We will probably go into police cells around the middle of March."

Police cells cost up to £300 a night, six or seven times the cost of keeping a prisoner in a jail. Mr Tilt warned a meeting of prison governors earlier that the prison population would hit 62,000 later this year. If the current rate of increase was maintained it would reach at least 66,000 by 2000.

Lancaster City Council yesterday deferred discussions of plans to use a former Pontin's holiday camp at Heysham, near Morecambe. The site is close to two nuclear power plants, Heysham 1 and 2, and the Prison Service must draw up plans to safely and speedily evacuate the site in the event of an accident.

However, the councillors decided to defer the matter until the service had concluded discussions with HM Nuclear Installations Inspectorate.

Prison officials had intended to ship over their newly acquired jail from its current home on the Hudson River in New York and berth it in Portland Harbour next month until the local councils refused to give it planning permission. It was estimated that the floating prison will cost more than £4m of taxpayers' money.

New scare fuels baby milk fears

Glenda Cooper
Consumer Affairs Correspondent

A second brand of baby milk has been withdrawn following cases of salmonella poisoning among French babies. Two batches of the product Lemiel 2, made by Milupa, on sale in France only, have been taken off the market after two cases of salmonella anatum were confirmed.

The milk is made in the same factory as Milumil, the formula brand withdrawn from sale in the UK and Ireland after 10 babies in Britain suffered the same infection.

A spokeswoman for Milupa, now owned by the Dutch company Nutricia, said yesterday that no link had been confirmed between the Milumil case and Lemiel 2 but the batches were being withdrawn as a precautionary measure. "It was thought the wisest thing to do while the Milumel investigation was going on."

An inspection of the Colmar factory in France where both brands are made had been undertaken by the French authorities, UK experts from the Department of Health, and Milupa's technical-quality team, which had yet to find traces of salmonella. Some results of laboratory tests were still awaited. "No other product is suspected or linked. We do not know of any other cases," added the spokeswoman.

Patti Rundall, international co-ordinator for Baby Milk Action, called for the Government and the European Commission to instigate tests at the Colmar and all other baby-food factories and for all breastmilk substitutes to carry warnings. "Nutricia and Milupa have spent millions of pounds on promotion which has minimised the risks of artificial feeding ..." she said.

"Since all dairy herds have salmonella and other contaminations intermittently and it takes only a very few organisms to infect a formula-fed infant, parents should be aware of the risks they when buy these products."

In the red soil of Angola, twenty million land mines.

For a young aid worker, James Jordan, one step too far.

For his mother, Molly, the start of a journey that will change her life for ever.

Who killed James Jordan?
Where does the blame really lie?

GRAHAM HURLEY
AN OUTSTANDING THRILLER WRITER
THE PERFECT SOLDIER
OUT NOW IN PAPERBACK

هكذا من الاصل

Scientists of the rockpool help tiniest starfish to twinkle amid the pollution

Rare sight: A pair of the tiny brooding cushion stars sharing a rock pool at West Angle Bay with their larger cousin, the cushion star Photograph: Rob Stratton

Nerys Lloyd-Pierce

A rare species of tiny starfish virtually wiped out when the Sea Empress tanker shed more than 70,000 tonnes of crude oil on the Pembrokeshire coast 12 months ago may be getting a helping hand to regenerate its numbers thanks to a sophisticated process of DNA match-making.

The brooding cushion star – so named because it incubates its eggs – was flourishing in rock pools at West Angle Bay until heavy pollution from the tanker reduced numbers from an estimated 150 to approximately 12.

More seriously still, the remaining Pembrokeshire population failed to breed last year and the end of its three- to four-year life cycle is now approaching. According to experts from King's College, London, and the Field Studies Council who have been monitoring it, the Welsh cushion star is considered to be functionally extinct without man's intervention.

"The hermaphrodite brooding cushion star needs to aggregate in order to breed," Dr Roland Emson, senior lecturer in biology at King's College, explained. "Even if they are only separated by a few metres within a rock pool they cannot locate each other in order for this to happen. Surveys carried out four months and eight months after the spill indicate that the remaining population is too widely scattered for reproduction to take place."

The only hope of regenerating the colony in West Angle Bay – where it was first identified as a separate species in the mid-Seventies – is by extracting DNA from its tube feet and from those of specimens inhabiting similar terrain in south Devon and creating a genetic picture to see if the two are sufficiently compatible to breed.

Andy Simms, assistant warden and deputy director of studies at the Field Studies Council's Orielton Field Centre, Dyfed, hopes compatibility can be confirmed as he is anxious about the long-term consequences for the rock pool community in the bay should the starfish disappear.

"The removal of any organism can be a negative thing as the stability of the marine community living in those pools is inevitably weakened," he said. "It is rather like the house-of-cards effect, keep taking the cards away and eventually the whole thing will collapse."

"Whether or not the brooding cushion star is a keystone species has yet to be established, but one of the reasons this site is extremely special is because it is so rich in terms of biodiversity and it would be a great pity for that abundance to diminish."

Police fail test over stop and search

Patricia Wynn Davies
Legal Affairs Editor

A dramatic reduction in the use of stop-and-search powers by police produced a better rate of arrests while maintaining crime clear-up rates, according to research published yesterday.

The results will put pressure on police forces to reduce the number of stop and searches, which have caused particular discontent among the Afro-Caribbean community following suggestions of victimisation of black youths.

In the first experiment of its kind, a comparative study between two similar Metropolitan Police divisions found that a 52 per cent reduction in Police and Criminal Evidence Act searches conducted in Tottenham, north London, produced a higher ratio of consequent arrests but did not appear to damage clear-up rates. In the other division, Vauxhall, south London, and nationally, searches increased during the study period, which ran from July 1995 to June 1996.

Numbers searched in Tottenham fell from 7,334 to 3,533. Although arrests also fell by 45 per cent, the proportion resulting from searches rose from 10 per cent to 12 per cent. Although similar in size, social and economic factors, police divisional strength and organisation, the numbers stopped in Vauxhall were 7,743 – similar to the previous year.

Two key distinctions between the two areas appear to account for the wide disparity in the use of the power. During the study, which was conducted by the National Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders for the Haringey Community and Police Consultative Group, anyone stopped in Tottenham was given a leaflet explaining the police powers being used and the individual's rights. Those stopped in Vauxhall were not.

In addition, searches had been removed as a performance indicator in Tottenham, while the division had improved targeting of suspects and given a commitment to improve relations with the community. Searches remain a performance measure in Vauxhall.

The study found that 45 per cent of those searched in Tottenham were black, although black people account for only 24 per cent of the local population. Bernie Grant, Labour MP for Tottenham, said: "I have never argued that the police should not have the power to stop and search when they have real cause to suspect criminal activity. But unnecessary use of stop and search has now become so extensive as to amount to an abuse of civil rights."

David Gilbertson, a Metropolitan Police commander and formerly Division Chief Superintendent at Tottenham, says in the foreword to the report that the leaflet initiative had led to "a marked reduction in the level of stop and search without any appreciable loss in terms of effective policing".

Ann Dunn, one of the report's authors, said the leaflet "made some officers think twice about stopping somebody".

Tottenham's decision to scrap stop and search as a performance indicator in favour of a "quality, not quantity" measure is also likely to have played a significant part.

Stop and search was "a contact sport for officers", which was highly competitive between teams trying to outdo each other, one senior Tottenham officer told the researchers.

DAILY POEM

The Poplar and the Passer-By

By Vasko Popa, translated by Anne Pennington

They're widening the street
Clogged with traffic
They're felling the poplars

The bulldozers take a run-up
And with a single blow
Knock down the trees

One poplar just trembled
Withstood the iron

The bulldozer pulls back
From her noisily
Prepares for the final charge

In the huddle of passers-by
There's an elderly man

He takes his hat off to the poplar
Waves his umbrella at her
And shouts at the top of his voice

Don't give in love

Writing about the developing work of the Serbian poet Vasko Popa (1912-1991), Ted Hughes has called it "one of the most exciting things in modern poetry". Popa's *Collected Poems*, which first appeared in 1978 in Anne Pennington's translation, has now been revised and expanded by Francis R Jones. It is published by Anvil Press at £25.

Tried, tested, and better for the environment.

The Ecolabel has been introduced to help consumers choose products which are less harmful to the environment.

It is an award for products which have been independently assessed and judged to be better for the environment than others in their category.

If a product has an Ecolabel you know that it meets the European Union Environmental Award criteria.

Choosing a product with an Ecolabel is one of many simple steps you can take to help protect and care for your environment.

To find out more call 0345 86 86 86, or cut out the coupon.

Title ____ Initials ____ Surname ____
Address ____ TI3
____ Postcode ____ Please tick if you would like to receive further information ☐
Send to: Helping Your Environment, PO Box 200, Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, CV37 9ZZ

CHOOSING GREENER PRODUCTS... Helping your environment

The Ecolabel.
Helping you choose the more environmentally friendly products.

Energy Saving Trust
Promoting, advising and helping you make the energy efficient choice.

Tidy Britain Group.
Helping to achieve a litter-free environment.

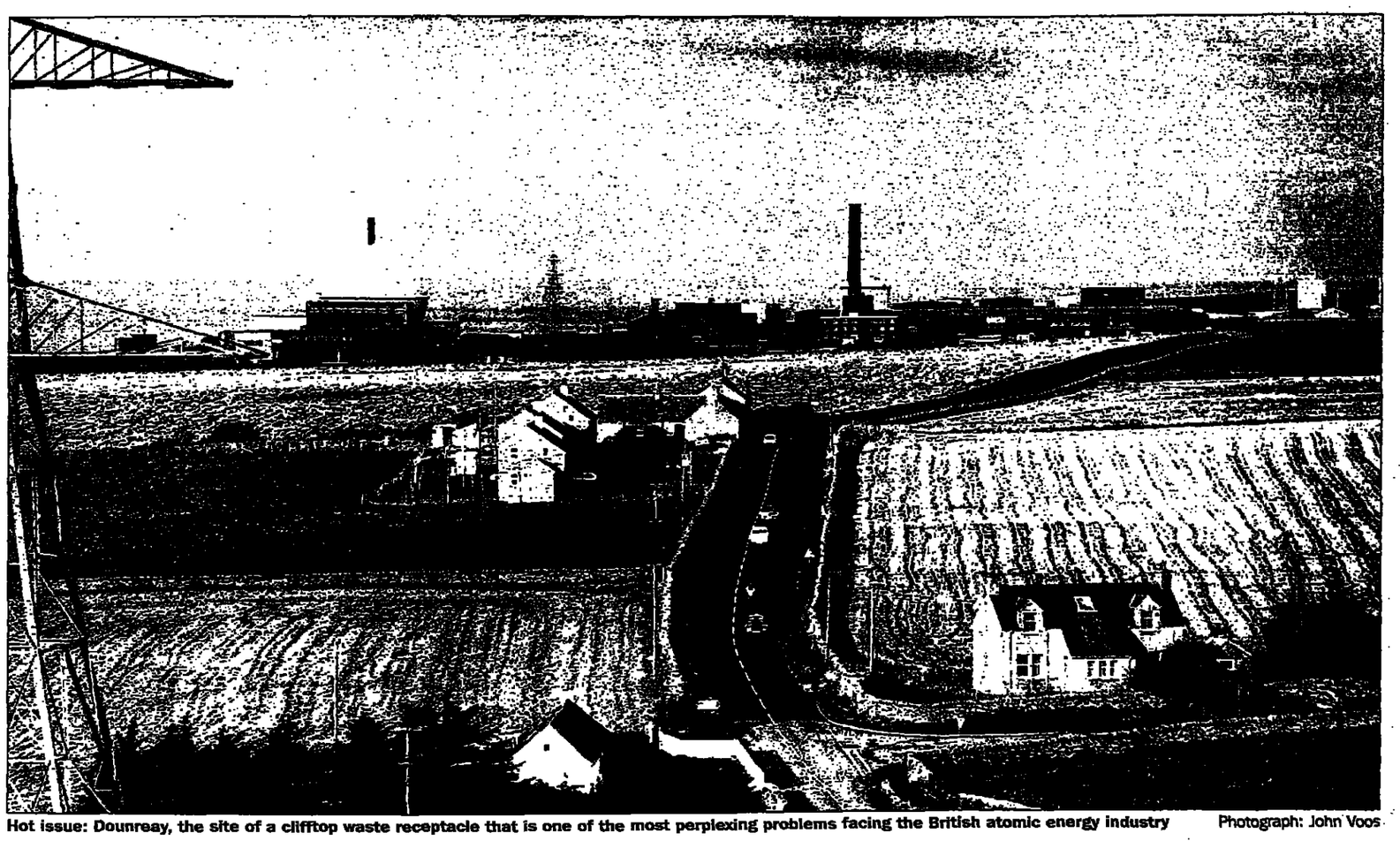
Going for Green.
Making a world of difference - together.

Environment Agency*
Safeguarding and improving the environment.
*In Scotland - the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

Supported by
DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT

news

Dounreay dilemma over shaft used for atom junk



Hot issue: Dounreay, the site of a clifftop waste receptacle that is one of the most perplexing problems facing the British atomic energy industry Photograph: John Voos

Nicholas Schoon
Environment Correspondent

A deep hole on a remote Scottish clifftop is one of Britain's two most awkward and dangerous radioactive sites. Yesterday its owners, the UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA), announced three more research contracts into how the Dounreay waste shaft can be made permanently safe.

It has promised to present firm proposals to ministers by the end of this year. One option is to freeze the 200ft depth of the water-filled, vertical shaft. But, whatever solution is embraced, the highest priorities will be to eliminate the risk of a chemical explosion or a "criticality" – a runaway nuclear chain-reaction.

For 20 years, starting in 1957, radioactive waste from Dounreay, on mainland Britain's northernmost coastline, was dropped into the shaft. A volume equivalent to a medium-sized house took the plunge. It has left Dounreay under intense criticism and would never be contemplated today.

In 1977, a hydrogen explosion blew the concrete lid off the shaft, scattering small quantities of radioactive material. Dumping ceased and ever since the shaft has been monitored for any build-up of explosive gas. Were that were to happen, nitrogen would be pumped in to prevent a blast.

But this is not a permanent solution; for the next few tens of thousands of years, any escape of waste from the shaft would be highly dangerous. Unless a breakwater is built, and that too is under consideration, the sea will breach the shaft in about 200 years. Only UKAEA's sealed-off Number One pile at Windscale, Cumbria, site of the 1957 reactor fire which was Britain's worst nuclear accident, presents greater clean-up difficulties.

UKAEA's Dounreay director, Roy Nelson, said: "Clearly, the shaft is the most challenging task we face here." A solution will cost hundreds of millions of pounds. Dounreay, 20 miles from John O'Groats, was where Britain spent 40 years trying to perfect the fast-breeder reactor, which turns uranium into plutonium "breeding" its own fuel.

Three reactors were built and all have shut. The programme was killed because of costs, but the site will employ hundreds of people and absorb billions of pounds into the next century. The 15ft diameter shaft was used to haul away rock carved out when a tunnel was bored out to sea, taking Dounreay's liquid low-level radioactive waste 600 yards offshore.

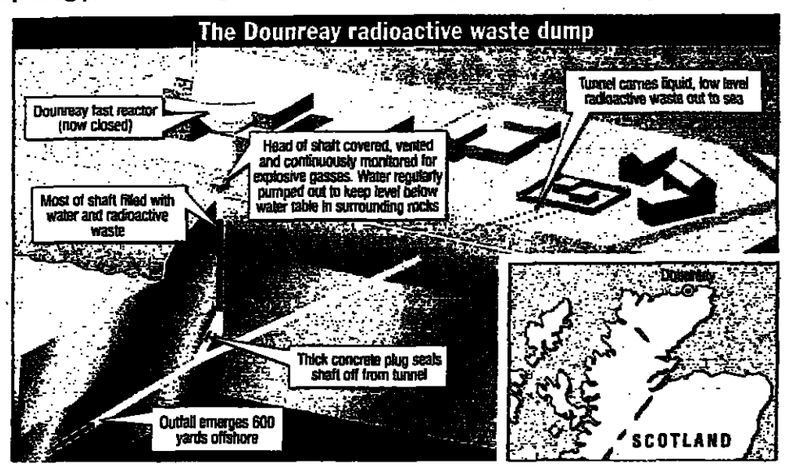
In the 1950s, permission was obtained to use the shaft as a dump for low and intermediate-level radioactive waste. A concrete plug was placed at the bottom to seal the shaft from the tunnel and the sea. Some 10,000 items were taken there from plants and laboratories around Dounreay in flasks. These would open and the waste plunge into the fresh water which had seeped in. UKAEA has been combing old logs to find out what was dumped and has interviewed retired Dounreay workers.

Items as big as lathes went down the shaft. So did glove boxes, used to shield workers as they manipulated highly radioactive materials. The 1977 explosion was caused by a mixture of sodium and potassium, the volatile coolant in fast-breeder reactors, inadvertently dumped in the shaft. The mixture reacted with water to produce hydrogen. All that was needed was a spark to ignite it and because sodium burns in air, that was readily available.

It will take thousands of years for radioactivity in the waste to decay to negligible levels. Making it safe in the long term may require pulling it out of the shaft and placing it in a permanent repository. It is too dangerous for people to do, so remote-controlled arms and grabs combined with closed-circuit television will be used. The worst nightmare is a nuclear chain-reaction beginning in a sludge of uranium and plutonium particles which may build up at the bottom of the shaft.

Dounreay scientist Doug Graham said such a "criticality" was inconceivable in the undisturbed shaft. But any technique devised for removing the waste would have to provide absolute assurance no chain-reaction could happen.

While the ultra long-term solution will probably involve emptying the shaft, UKAEA is also considering interim solutions. One option is to bore holes all around it and pump refrigerants through these to freeze the water and waste.



A neck injury can mean months of visits to a specialist for treatment. And, if you're not adequately covered, it can also mean months of expensive bills.

Some policies don't cover treatments like osteopathy and chiropractic. And, incredibly, some don't give you full cover for basics like specialist consultations and surgeons' fees.

Primecare, from Prime Health offers all this cover and much more – at a price that's equivalent to some companies' budget schemes. On top of which, we're one of the few to offer a no-claims discount of up to 50%.

Why not call us to see how your policy compares to Primecare?

"What's really painful is not being covered by my health insurance."

Call 0800 77 99 55 now, or fill in the coupon for a no-obligation quote.

Title First name Surname
Address
Postcode
Phone (inc. STD code) Day Evening
Date of birth of the eldest person requiring cover
Cover required: Single Married Family Single parent family
Renewal date of current insurance (if applicable)
If you'd prefer a representative to visit please tick box.
Please post to (no stamp required) Prime Health Limited, FREEPOST, (GI 2192) Guildford, GU1 4BR. http://www.primehealth.co.uk
M04 404 NG

Prime Health
A member of the Standard Life Group

Manchester to get extra £43m for bomb damage

Extra government funding of £43m over the next three years to help rebuild Manchester city centre was announced yesterday by the Deputy Prime Minister, Michael Heseltine.

Coming on top of a £20m grant from the European Union, the money brings to £63m public sector funding secured by Manchester Millennium Limited – the taskforce set up to oversee the rebuilding work in the wake of the IRA bomb explosion last summer, which injured more than 220 people.

Regeneration chiefs say that the £63m, together with a £20m bid submitted to the Millennium Commission to create a distinctive "millennium quarter", will "lever in" more than £340m of private investment for the city centre.

The £43m announced yesterday by Mr Heseltine from London via a video link-up with planners in Manchester, will be channelled through the Departments of Transport and Environment.

The announcement was welcomed by the city, and by Labour's deputy leader, John Prescott, who was addressing a conference in Manchester.

Regeneration planners also unveiled their "masterplan" for rebuilding the city centre yesterday.

Mr Prescott said Labour backed the plan "in principle" – though final approval would depend on the "fine print".

The £43m will go towards schemes including diverting traffic away from the city centre, new bus facilities, pedestrian and cycleways, and the creation of new public open spaces.

Richard Leese, leader of Manchester City Council and deputy chairman of Manchester Millennium Limited, said the financial commitment would ensure delivery of the plans within the three-year target.

"Now we have the masterplan, the commitment and the resources to start the rebuilding in earnest, the private sector will now have the confidence to invest," he added.

Price tag put on tests for head teachers

Judith Judd
Education Editor

Head teachers have told Labour it will cost £45m to fund a compulsory qualification for all head teachers. David Hart, general secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, has asked for a spending commitment for the full amount from Labour in return for his association's support for a compulsory scheme.

The Prime Minister and Tony Blair clashed in the Commons over head-teacher training last week after inspectors said 3,000 heads were not up to scratch.

A government-backed voluntary qualification starts this autumn, though John Major hinted he might consider making it a requirement for all heads. Labour has said its scheme would be compulsory.

In a letter to David Blunkett, shadow Secretary of State for Education, Mr Hart argues: "Since the Labour Party considers the national qualification of headship important, it must be prepared to pay for all candidates. We estimate that there would be 15,000 candidates at a cost of £3,000 each or £45m." Failure to provide the money will worsen the difficulties already faced by many inner-city schools in recruiting new heads, he adds.

Mr Hart says the Government chose not to make the present scheme compulsory because of the cost. As a result, some heads will have to find the money from their own pockets.

Heads remain sceptical about the need for compulsion but Mr Hart says they could accept it if the Government provided all the funds and all candidates had the same opportunities to acquire it.

■ Secondary heads said changes to A-level to be announced today will cost £600m. A new exam, halfway between GCSE and A-level will be introduced to encourage students to sit a wider range of subjects. The Secondary Heads Association said staffing and exam fees would cost more because students would be taking more exams.

SWIFTCALL

listen

LOW COST INTERNATIONAL CALLS

USA 10p
Australia 20p
South Africa 40p
India 60p

• NEW PER SECOND BILLING •

1 This is how much you save...

FLAT RATES ALL PRICES ARE IN PENCE PER MINUTE

SWIFTCALL		B.T.	SWIFTCALL		B.T.
Australia	20p	54p	S.Korea	50p	108p
Canada	16p	30p	Malaysia	60p	108p
France	16p	36p	N.Zealand	30p	54p
Fiji	90p	135p	Nigeria	70p	131p
Germany	16p	36p	Pakistan	80p	133p
Ghana	70p	131p	Singapore	40p	69p
Hong Kong	40p	69p	S.Africa	40p	102p
India	60p	133p	Taiwan	40p	108p
Ireland	16p	25p	Thailand	70p	108p
Japan	30p	77p	USA	10p	30p

2 This is how it works...

• Pre payment of £25 entitles you to £25 of Swiftcall talktime. That's over 4 hrs to the USA.
• Access to our network is easy. All you need is a touch tone phone to call our international exchange FREE from anywhere in the U.K.

CALL US NOW
For information on hundreds of other destinations and to open an account
FREEPHONE 0800 769 0000
Please ask for extension 716

New phonecards available at all good newsagents. Distributors urgently required to cope with massive demand. CALL NOW!

Operators are standing by 24hrs a day 7 days a week ready to take your call. Please have your credit card ready. Comparisons against B.T. standard weekday rate. Subject to change at 30 days notice. Prices correct at Jan 31st 1997.
Please send cheques for £25 marked 'new account' to: Swiftcall, 10-20 Commercial Street, St. Helier, Jersey, JE2

هكذا من الاصل

World trips, free lunches, outings to the races - an everyday tale of Labour councillors

Doncaster council was run with a culture of arrogance and profligacy. **Christian Wolmar** reports

A culture of profligacy borne of arrogance and an unassailable electoral position has grown up inside the council which runs the northern industrial town of Doncaster, according to many former councillors and officials interviewed by *The Independent*.

Labour has been increasing its electoral dominance, like elsewhere in local government, so that the party now holds all but five of the 63 seats on the council, making effective opposition difficult. And within the Labour group, an inner caucus created in 1981, called the Mining Community Group, a name left over from the days when a majority of the councillors were miners, dominates proceedings and makes all the key decisions in private before getting endorsement from the rest of the Labour group.

The District Auditor, Gordon Sutton, who is responsible for auditing the council's accounts, said at a meeting with leading councillors and officials that in the council there "was a culture that has grown and needs to be looked at".

> ❝It was the arrogance of power which led to the freeloading❞

It was, as one council officer put it, "the arrogance of power" which led to the free-loading. One councillor told another recently elected colleague: "You decide where you want to go and you find a reason why you need to go there."

The Labour leader, Peter Welsh, 42, is a former miner described in the *Doncaster Star* as "a bit of a lad" and has attracted notoriety twice recently. He hit the local headlines a year ago when he was pictured in the *Doncaster Star* at the racecourse with a woman on his lap. Nothing remarkable in that as both are single, except that she happened to be a local Conservative councillor, Kate Bannard, and the two have gone on to develop what is described in the paper as a "romantic attachment".

Mr Welsh also attracted criticism when, at the St Leger's dinner at the racecourse in September 1995, he was reported in the *Racing Post* to have jeered Lord Wakeham, the Conservative peer who is also chairman of the Betting Levy Board.

The racecourse, owned and operated by the council, is at the centre of many of the allegations of excesses as many of the trips abroad were to visit racecourses to develop expertise in running the Doncaster course.

Furthermore, every race day at Doncaster is a free lunch and bar for the racecourse committee, and a free drink and race tickets for every other councillor. The free bar has now been scrapped following the auditor's criticism.

The relationship with Doncaster 2000 is also the subject of concern and will be investigated further by the auditor. The venture was set up by the council as a partnership between itself and a local developer and builder called Keepmoat.

Under a contract which is now being scrutinised for its legality by the auditor, the developer gets first call on all surplus council land and shares the profits with the council.

In his report, Mr Sutton criticised the fact that councillors received hospitality which he said was "inappropriate because of its source".

He said councillors and officers attending race meetings found free raffle tickets on their seats and the prizes included an all-expenses paid trip for two to the Kentucky Derby.

Another reason given for councillors' trips abroad has been twinning with foreign towns. Doncaster has no less than five twin towns – Wilmington, North Carolina, Avion in Northern France, Herten in Germany, Dandong in China and Gliwice in Poland. According to council rules the journeys were supposed to be undertaken in economy class, but Mr Sutton found that some trips were taken in business or club class.

According to council minutes, air travel on higher rate fares, such as business or club, amounted to £20,581 in 1994/5 for councillors, and £15,461 for officers. Mr Welsh, the council leader, speaking at a meeting of the council's policy and resources committee, sought to justify the high travel costs by saying that club and business tickets were more flexible than cheaper tickets.

In fact, club and business classes are much more expensive than full economy, which is also fully transferable.

The Conservative opposition leader, John Dainty, has on several occasions attempted to get information about the purpose of the trips and a full list of those on them but has been unable to do so.

He said: "There has been no committee approval of these trips and no reports about what happened on them."

When *The Independent* approached Tony Sellars, chairman of the Labour group, to ask him which council trips he had been on recently, he agreed that he had been to China. When asked if he had been to Poland he said: "I can't comment on that."

Had he been to Sweden? "I've no idea, I can't remember." Had he been to Jersey? "I can't remember," he replied.

And had he been to Japan? "No, not to Japan."

He said he would consult his diary and return the call to *The Independent*, but he did not do so.

Fine prospect: Doncaster racecourse seen from the council's new grandstand Photograph: Kipper Matthews

Conservative councillor Kate Bannard with Labour group leader Peter Welsh, at Doncaster racecourse Photograph: Danum Press

Segers denies ever throwing a game

The former Wimbledon goalkeeper Hans Segers, who is accused of being part of a match-fixing plot, told a jury today yesterday he had never thrown a game in his life.

Segers was giving evidence at Winchester Crown Court where he and former Liverpool and Southampton goalkeeper Bruce Grobbelaar, 29, the former Aston Villa and Wimbledon striker, John Fashanu, 34, and Malaysian Heng Suan Lim, 31, deny conspiring to give and accept corrupt payments.

Segers told the court that in 1994 he was receiving a wage of £1,000 a week, plus a signing-on fee of £30,000 year, a £50,000 loyalty bonus and a "clean sheet" bonus.

He said the 1993-4 season, the period to which the allegations relate, was one of Wimbledon's most successful.

Desmond De Silva QC, Segers' counsel, asked if he had ever received money or been offered money for throwing a game. "No, never. Nobody asked me to throw a game, I've never thrown a game," Segers replied.

Segers said his principal sources of income at that time, outside playing football, were a tie company, commentary work for Dutch television, and he provided match information and result predictions on Dutch and English matches for Mr Lim.

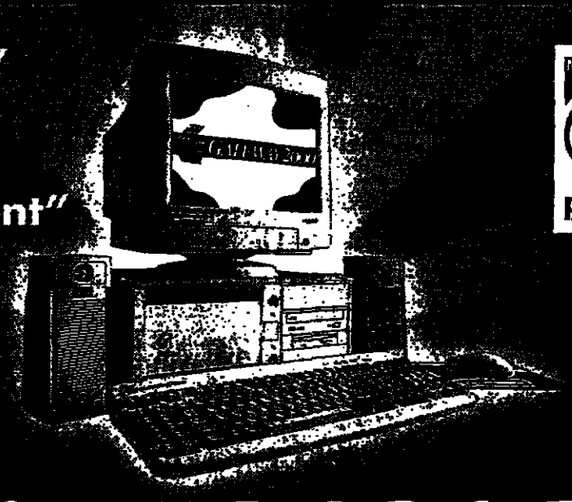
He said he first met Mr Lim in 1993, and agreed to do forecasts on Dutch matches for £1,500. He said he mainly forecast Dutch matches but would help Mr Lim with information on teams in English matches.

Asked if he knew at the time that what he was doing may have been against Football Association rules, he said: "At the time I was doing it, no."

When he had been questioned by police he told them he did not know Mr Lim. Seger told the court that this was because Lou Macari, a manager at Swindon Town, had recently been banned for a year by the FA for betting on his team, and so Seger had not wanted to admit to forecasting.

SEE IT, HEAR IT, EXPERIENCE IT!

"Fabulous"
"Superb"
"Magnificent"



MMX intel inside pentium

INCREDIBLE!

You won't believe the fantastic power of the Gateway 2000® P5-200 Multimedia! Storming to the forefront of PC performance, the P5-200 Multimedia features an Intel Pentium® processor with MMX™ technology. So it boasts maximum power and speed – accelerating and enhancing all your applications, from multimedia to communications. Better still, all our systems are individually configured so you can customise the PC you want... screen size... hard drive... memory, they're all up to you! And we're proud to give you award-winning service and support, including:

- Free telephone support on all your hardware and software for as long as you own your PC.
- A 30-day no quibble money-back guarantee (shipping costs not refundable) plus Gateway 2000 warranties.

P5-200 MULTIMEDIA ■ Intel 200MHz Pentium Processor with MMX technology ■ 32MB High Performance SDRAM ■ 256K Pipeline Burst Cache ■ 3.5" 1.44MB Floppy Disk Drive ■ Mitsumi 12X CD-ROM ■ Quantum 5.5GB EIDE Hard Drive ■ Diamond Viper 90 Wavetable Sound Card ■ Altec Lansing ACS410 Speakers with ACS251 Sub-woofer ■ STB Velocity VX 3D Graphics Accelerator 4MB VRAM ■ EuroVivo 33.6k Data Fax Voice Modem ■ 17" CrystalScan Colour Monitor ■ MX Tower Case ■ Microsoft Windows 95 105 Keyboard ■ MS Windows 95, MS Mouse Version 2.0 ■ MS Office Professional 95 ■ Internet Software Bundle ■ Software Pack Enhanced for MMX technology ■ 3 Year Limited Warranty

£1849 (£2206.65 inc. VAT & Delivery)

Call our Friendly Sales Team now!
Or you can call in to our Showroom at
10 Bedford Street, Covent Garden,
London WC2E 9HE. You'll be glad you did!

Showroom Hours of Business:
12.30 pm – 6.30 pm Mondays
9.30 am – 6.30 pm Tuesday – Friday
10.00 am – 4.00 pm Saturdays
Closed Sundays and Bank Holidays

Call now before offer expires on our Microsoft® Office Professional™ 97 Upgrade.
Please call for information on Business Lease Options.

GATEWAY2000
"You've got a friend in the business."®
0800 39 2000
http://www.gw2k.co.uk
Gateway 2000, Clonshaugh Industrial Estate, Dublin 17, Ireland.

Configurations and prices are subject to change without notice. ©1997 Gateway 2000 Europe black-and-white spot design, "G" logo, "You've got a friend in the business" slogan, CrystalScan, AnyKey and Gateway 2000 are trademarks or registered trademarks of Gateway 2000, Inc. The Intel Inside Logo and Pentium are trademarks or registered trademarks and MMX is a trademark of Intel Corporation. All other brands and product names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies. 12% AnyKey keyboard featured in photograph is available as an option. Call for prices. All sales subject to Gateway 2000 Europe's standard terms and conditions and limited warranty.
*Industry standard practice is to measure monitors using the CRT size. Actual viewing area can be approx. 1.5" less.

Midland Bank plc is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and only advises on its own life assurance, pensions and unit trusts. The rate quoted is gross p.a. – i.e. before the deduction of tax applied to interest on savings – and was correct at 21.1.97 but may alter in the future. Interest is paid annually, but a monthly option is available. Ray is a fictional character but his story is based on a real Midland customer. BD/06

Meet Ray.

Ray's found a stress-free way to get 7.25% on his savings each year.

Ray likes to take it easy. Whether he's fishing or planning his savings, Ray doesn't want to worry about anything. That's why he asked for Midland's brochure on HIDB (High Interest Deposit Bond). It's as safe as any savings account but it lets him earn better interest – a 7.25% return on his own three year investment. He could have chosen a six month plan but Ray, true to form, isn't in that much of a hurry.

He called 0800 100 160 and asked for an information pack.

Pick up the phone,

or visit a branch,

or cut the coupon.

MIDLAND
The Listening Bank
Member HSBC Group

For further details please complete the coupon and send to: Midland Bank plc, HIDB, FREEPOST BS4335, Bristol, BS1 3YX

Title Initials Surname
Address
Town County
Postcode Telephone (home) IND 11/2

Are you a Midland customer? ☐ Yes ☐ No If so, please fill in your sort code: 40/__/__
Are you happy to receive information from Midland in the future? ☐ Yes ☐ No.

Racial conflict: Calls for boycott by British liberals to support plight of black workers on slave wages rejected for now

SA wine growers sip at last chance saloon

Mary Braid
Cape Town

After weeks of vicious debate about racism, slave labour and immorality in the South African wine industry, the Cape wine fraternity finally agreed on something yesterday – no one wants the British to interfere by mounting a post-apartheid wine boycott.

The warning to liberal, well-meaning Britons is the latest twist in a saga which began last month when John Platter, the celebrated South African wine writer, lambasted the Cape's all-white winelands establishment on BBC Radio 4 over its plans to share out 2bn (about £285m) to 5bn rand of assets, accumulated during the apartheid years, among 4,700 white farmers. Mr Platter exposed the industry's exploitation of tens of thousands of Cape Coloured labourers and its barbaric use of political and criminal prisoners as slave labour until the early 1980s. Yesterday, at his vineyard near Stellenbosch, he was taking nothing back. In a letter to the Afrikaans newspaper *Die Burger* last week he suggested the industry's restructuring – or privatisation – amounted to "looting" and denounced the move as out of step with attempts to redress the injustices of the past.

> ❛ Platter exposed the exploitation of tens of thousands of Coloured labourers ❜

But he was furious at *Die Burger* reports yesterday associating him with suggestions in a British Sunday newspaper that a European boycott might be in order. "A boycott would be completely counter-productive to producers and labourers," he said. Worse, the boycott call obscures the real issues and gives white owners somewhere to hide.

At home, the KWV, the co-operative of vineyard owners which has proposed its own privatisation, has condemned Mr Platter and his wife Erica as traitors. Neighbours have burned copies of the couple's annual wine guide – the bible on South African wine – and local farmers are promising to mount their own boycott – of next year's Platter guide.

At the centre of the row are tens of thousands of Cape Coloureds who, three years after the end of white minority rule, still toil in the vineyards for as little as R100 a week – the price of two bottles of South African red or white in a British supermarket – and a daily *dop* (drink) of half a litre of wine.

According to Grant Twigg, the general secretary of the Farm Food and Rural Workers Union, also a Cape Coloured, the daily wine quota keeps the vineyard workers docile and too dependent to leave the industry. Alcoholism, he claims, is deliberately encouraged by many farmers. He, like the Platters, argues that the workers have a right to share in the benefits accrued during the apartheid years.

Since the early 1990s, he says, the industry has seen some improvements but the vast majority of workers are still appallingly exploited, despite 6 per cent annual growth in the domestic market and a 38 per cent increase between 1995 and 1996 in overseas sales.

But he too rejects the idea of an overseas boycott. "During the years of apartheid my union supported sanctions," he said. "But in this case a growing industry and particularly its workers would suffer."

The Platter camp is attempting to force KWV to hive off a significant portion of the apartheid-era assets to transform an industry run by whites for whites. They want to bring blacks and Coloureds into management and ownership.

So far they have succeeded in persuading Derek Hanekom, the Agriculture Minister, to halt KWV's privatisation plans while an inquiry takes place. They argue that this is a rare case when doing the right thing is also good for business.

With blacks involved in the business, the pleasures of wine would be filter though to the black community, and boost home sales. That is the dream of Jubalane Nstangase, currently the only black manager in the Cape winelands and a one-off in the South African wine trade.

Raised in Soweto, he learned the wine trade while in exile in New York.

He began importing South African wines to the US in 1992 and finally returned to his native country in 1995, where he was hired by the white entrepreneur Dick Enthoven, owner of the Spier Wine Estate.

Mr Nstangase was employed to create a few waves, but like some "token" blacks taken on by big business, his mouth has proved bigger than his boss probably anticipated.

This week the heat is on. The Afrikaans papers is crammed with criticism and still Mr Nstangase cannot stop talking. On a Sunday – a big day for visitors – on the Spier estate, Mr Nstangase sticks out; the only other blacks are serving in the wine shop or trailing an endless stream of little blonde girls around a large lawn on ponies.

The wine industry he describes is rotten with racism. He came back to South Africa to realise a dream. "When I was importing, my American customers always asked the same questions – how many blacks were employed in management of estates, how many black owners were there, how many black exporters were there?"

Of course there were none. He came home to change that; to open the business and the product up to blacks. Much is made of professional whites leaving South Africa. Blacks who returned with skills, only to be hampered by white intransigence and invested interests, are somehow invisible. "If you mention black empowerment in the wine industry, everyone cringes," he says.

He is angry at recent comments by a KWV official that wine is always a white-dominated sphere, in any country. "That's just the sort of thing they used to say when I was growing up. It was the excuse they gave for not paying whites and blacks the same wages. "Look around," he added, gazing across the lawn towards another smart restaurant devoid of black visitors. "If I didn't work here as a black man I would never come in."

Grapes of wrath: Workers at a vineyard in Paarl, near Cape Town. It is felt a boycott would hit them hard Photograph: Jodi Bieber

Dubious countries which shook off bad taste

James Roberts

For those whose greatest tippling pleasure comes from what they refuse to drink, rather than what they drink, times are getting hard. With the return of the fruits of the Cape to polite tables and bars, reasons for turning one's nose up at a particular bottle are almost exclusively confined to the effect of a wine on the palate.

Supermarket shelves are groaning with the produce of once-questionable countries of origin, such as Chile, Argentina, Bulgaria and Brazil. But no one gets much exercised about human-rights abuses by the government in Santiago before selecting a Chilean red, unless they confuse Pinochet with Pinot Noir. Few remember General Galtieri. The days when port was politically incorrect ended with the 1974 Portuguese revolution; Franco's death put Rioja back on the wine list; retsina came back when the Colonels went.

Bulgaria, it is true, has had some bad publicity recently, with demonstrators in Sofia demanding that elections be brought forward by a year or so, so that they can get rid of an unpopular and incompetent government, but we are still talking timing here, and not fighting for the right to have elections at all.

Only Romania has provided relief recently for conscientious abstainers, with OutRage! and Amnesty International calling on us to switch our brand loyalty away from Bucharest on the ground that the country's recently modified laws on homosexuality are still discriminatory.

The wines of the Commonwealth may offend some refined drinkers, but it is hard to see how they can be *politically* offended by, say, a Canadian Red or a New Zealand Chardonnay.

The last great wine boycott was directed against France during its nuclear tests in the Pacific last year. Australia and New Zealand led the boycott and the impact on France's wine exports was significant.

The great escape.

We don't make you lock up your savings just because we pay you higher interest.

	£500-£4,999	£5,000-£9,999	£10,000-£24,999	£25,000-£49,999	£50,000-£99,999
Direct Line Instant Access Account	4.50%	4.75%	5.50%	5.65%	5.75%
Halifax Solid Gold (90 Day Notice)	3.00%	3.25%	4.00%	4.50%	4.60%
Woolwich Premier 90 (90 Day Notice)	N/A	3.50%	4.20%	4.80%	5.10%
Yorkshire Building Society Key 90 Plus	N/A	N/A	4.55%	5.00%	5.50%

All rates are gross* and correct at 28th January 1997.

- Direct Line offers you instant access *and* high returns on your savings without locking your money away for up to 90 days.
- The more savings you have the higher our rates.
- You can pool your savings with family or friends for even higher returns.
- If you want more money for your money, call now.

DIRECT LINE SAVINGS

0181 667 1121 LONDON | 0161 833 1121 MANCHESTER | 0141 221 1121 GLASGOW

CALL ANYTIME 8am to 8pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 5pm Saturday. Please quote ref. IND43
http://www.directline.co.uk
A Royal Bank of Scotland company.

Savings are provided by Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 250 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH, which is a member of the Deposit Protection Scheme established under the Banking Act 1987 (as amended). Payments under the scheme are limited to 90% of a depositor's total deposits subject to a maximum payment to any one depositor of £18,000 (or ECU 20,000 if greater). Further details of the Scheme are available on request. *The gross rate is the rate paid without the deduction of income tax. All rates shown are subject to variation and are based on annual payment of interest. For your added security, telephone calls may be recorded and the recording kept secure. We may also monitor telephone calls with the aim of improving our service to you. Direct Line and the red telephone on wheels are the trademarks of Direct Line Insurance plc and used with the permission of Direct Line Insurance plc.

SEND YOUR LOVED ONE A VALENTINES MESSAGE

Why not place a Valentines message in *The Independent* on 14th February and surprise your loved one on this special day?

CLASSIC FM

***The Independent* will send on your behalf a free C.D.(£14.49 rrp) called *"Classic Romance"* from CLASSIC FM, together with a reminder for them to look inside *The Independent* for their message.**

Simply compose your romantic message and **TELEPHONE** your message through to us by **4.00pm TODAY** (details of how to book your mesage are at the bottom of this coupon).

You can choose one of the following formats:

- Eight words plus the gift costs £19.50, extra words cost £1.00 each.
- For an extra £10.00 you can take an extra line above and below your message OR
- For £60.00 you can have a 3cm x 1 column full display advertisement. Extra centimetres cost £16.00 each.
- All above prices include gift.

Write your message above and tick your option (all prices are inclusive of VAT).
If in a foreign language, please attach English translation.

8 Words for £ 19.50 +extra words at £1 each..... ☐
As above with a line of space above and below (add £10)..... ☐
3cm x 1 column advertisement for £60..... ☐
As above plus extra centimetres (£16 each)..... ☐

Your details
Name:.....
Address:.....
Postcode:.....Daytime Phone No:.....

Your Valentine's details
Name:.....
Address:.....
Postcode:.....

I enclose a cheque made payable to Newspaper Publishing plc, or please debit, for the amount of £.....
my Visa / Mastercard number:.....Expiry Date:.....

TELEPHONE 0171 293 2000, 9.30am – 4.00pm

24 HOUR ANSWER PHONE: 0171 512 9366.

ALL MESSAGES MUST BE RECEIVED BY 4.00pm today, Tuesday 11th February.

If you do not wish to be sent details on products or services as recommended by The Independent please tick here ☐

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

France's far-right rejoices in banal victory

John Lichfield
Paris

The ultra-right Front National captured its fourth French town hall, in Vitrolles, at the weekend with a promise to run the town for the French, and not for foreigners. Catherine Mégret, the victorious candidate, also promised to run things more cheaply and more efficiently than the Socialists; and to govern according to local needs, not national dogma.

Oddly, her first act as mayor will be to return to her suburban home outside Paris and hand over the government of Vitrolles to obscure, local National Front politicians and officials. Mrs Mégret, who was running on behalf of her disqualified husband, made it clear from the beginning that she wanted to be elected mayor, but not to *be* mayor. Bruno Mégret, second in command of the party nationwide, has no more interest than his wife in running Vitrolles, a failed experiment in concrete urbanism on the outskirts of Marseilles. It will be left to a cabal of local FN supporters to govern the place: presumably following the example set by the three Front mayors elected in nearby towns in 1995.

The Front's municipal strategy, according to the party's chief ideologist – none other than Bruno Mégret – is to "banalise" the party's anti-immigrant, anti-establishment message: in other words to extend the FN's base by convincing voters that it is just another party, capable of running town halls more efficiently than the other parties.

Winning wave: National Front candidate Catherine Mégret after her election victory at Vitrolles at the weekend, with her husband Bruno (right) Photograph: AP

So what is the FN's record in its other seats of power – Toulon, Orange and Marignane? Town government has not collapsed, as perhaps the Front's opponents might have wished. There has been no wholesale persecution of immigrants. There has been no obvious gain in municipal efficiency either.

What there has been is a mixture of racist pettiness, political vindictiveness and censorship, mixed with the kind of cronyism which is rife throughout French local government. FN opponents – and some non-political locals – also complain of a rising mood of racial and political intolerance, which they blame on the example set from the town hall.

In Marignane, next door to Vitrolles, the FN mayor, Daniel Simonpieri, claims to have cut taxes and spending. A local apolitical taxpayers' group points out that taxes may have fallen by a few centimes but spending has, rather mysteriously, risen. One of the mayor's first acts was to abolish the special, pork-free school lunch menus which had previously been provided for Muslim and Jewish pupils. It is this kind of in-your-face racial insensitivity which gives the lie to the FN's claim that it is not a racist party. (The official Front line is that it supports the rights of French people of all races over immigrants of all races.)

In both Marignane and Orange, 60 miles to the north in the Rhône valley, the FN-controlled town halls have ordered – in the name of "ideological rebalancing" – local libraries to stock far-right newspapers, periodicals and books, and to cancel subscriptions to allegedly ultra-leftist newspapers. These include *Libération* which is only just left of centre, and a leftist but respectable regional newspaper, *La Marseillaise*.

In Orange, three out five social centres – those serving immigrant areas – have been closed. Town-hall employees have complained of an "atmosphere of humiliation, persecution and menace" directed against anyone who overtly resists the FN line.

In Toulon, the naval port east of Marseilles, and the largest city under FN control, the party record of day-to-day management is poor. Local taxes have risen, despite the slashing of cultural and sporting budgets. The town's traditional Christmas distribution of toys to poor children was switched last year to a new organisation, which gave presents to "French children only". The mayor, Jean-Marie le Chevallier, described as "unfortunate" the invitation of a Jewish writer, Marek Halter, to the Toulon book festival.

Overall, the very fact that the FN is running towns may, as Mr Megret hopes, "banalise" the party. But its record fails utterly to support its claim to be a respectable, pro-French but non-racist democratic movement.

Korzhakov wins seat in Duma

Anatoly Verbin
Reuters

Moscow — President Boris Yeltsin's burly ex-bodyguard, who has promised to reveal the secrets of the Kremlin, broke into politics yesterday by winning a seat in parliament.

Alexander Korzhakov, a former close friend who is now one of Mr Yeltsin's fiercest opponents, won 26 per cent of Sunday's vote in the central Russian city of Tula, according to preliminary results.

The former KGB major took a leaf out of Mr Yeltsin's book for his aggressive campaign, bringing rock stars to the sleepy town and overwhelming the media with his advertising.

He emerged more than nine points clear of his nearest rival, local politician Eduard Pashchenko. Chess champion Anatoly Karpov was just behind in third place and Nikolai Novikov, a businessman who ran his campaign from a prison cell while awaiting trial for extortion, was fourth.

Some analysts predict that Mr Korzhakov will use the platform of the Duma and the immunity from prosecution enjoyed by deputies to step up his fight against Mr Yeltsin, who sacked him and other Kremlin hawks in June.

A close friend of Mr Yeltsin for 10 years, Mr Korzhakov has presented himself as a victim of a Kremlin plot and pledged to unveil "compromising material" against the establishment.

"I think he has enough material to make trouble for many Russian politicians," said Andrei Piontkovsky, of the Moscow Centre for Strategic Studies.

Last May Mr Korzhakov said he wanted the presidential election to be postponed, putting him on collision course with the liberal Anatoly Chubais, then effective head of Mr Yeltsin's campaign. Mr Chubais, now Kremlin chief of staff, has been called a regent by Mr Korzhakov, who says he has assumed huge powers since Mr Yeltsin fell ill in June.

Mr Yeltsin dismissed Mr Korzhakov before July's presidential runoff, which he won, and ordered an inquiry into the general's activities. Mr Korzhakov fought back by going to court and accusing Mr Yeltsin of defamation. There has been no decision yet.

Television channels, loyal to Mr Yeltsin, attacked Mr Korzhakov in a bid to put the voters off, but the residents of Tula showed the nationwide tendency to favour the candidate seen to carry political weight in the capital.

Mr Korzhakov promised to use his inside knowledge of the Kremlin to help Tula, a former defence industry centre suffering from the end of the Cold War. Voters turned out for his pre-election rallies eager to hear some Kremlin gossip, but Mr Korzhakov remained tight-lipped, saying he would only spill the beans once he was elected.

You wouldn't hold the Grand National anywhere but Aintree.

For top thoroughbreds, nowhere's quite like Aintree. And for front runners in all lines of business, nowhere is quite like the International Convention Centre, Birmingham.

Here's a tip. It's the modern facilities, outstanding quality of service, value for money and ease of access that makes the ICC the favourite every time.

So for your next conference, meeting or convention, back the winner. Call 0121 200 2000 for more details today.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE BIRMINGHAM

The Ultimate Convention Centre

International Convention Centre
Broad Street Birmingham B1 2EA

EMPLOYERS. IT'S VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU

GET YOUR

BOOKLET ABOUT THE DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

ACT

WHICH HAS NOW BECOME LAW. THE ACT COVERS ALL THOSE WITH TWENTY OR MORE EMPLOYEES,

TOGETHER

WITH THOSE PROVIDING A SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC.

For information phone 0345 622 633 (textphone 0345 622 644) quoting Emp/TI/1, or fill in this coupon. To DDA Information Line, Freepost MID02164, Stratford-upon-Avon, CV37 9BR. No. of employees: Under 20 ☐ 20-49 ☐ 50-99 ☐ 100+ ☐ Booklet required: What Employers Need to Know ☐ What Service Providers Need to Know ☐ Would you prefer a guide in: Braille ☐ AudioCassette ☐

Name (Mr/Mrs/Ms/Miss) Job Title

Type of business

Address EMP/TI/1

Postcode Telephone

disability – on the agenda

D/EE Department for Education and Employment

Separatist violence rends Spain with gun and bomb attacks

Government agenda left in tatters as Basques go on offensive, writes **Elizabeth Nash**

Devastation: The aftermath of the attack in Granada, in which a car bomb left one person dead and eight injured Photograph: AFP

Madrid — Separatist violence ripped through Spain from north to south yesterday when a car bomb killed a man and wounded eight in Granada, a gunman shot dead a Supreme Court judge in the street in Madrid, and a leader of the Basque nationalist party linked to Eta separatists was found dead, possibly by his own hand, near the Basque city of Bilbao.

As the blows fell one upon the other yesterday morning, the King made a rare statement of condemnation of what he called "blind and sterile violence" and the Interior Minister, Jaime Mayor Oreja, cut short a visit to Israel to hurry home.

The events tore to pieces the agenda of the Prime Minister, Jose Maria Aznar, and the leader of the Basque government, Jose Antonio Ardanza, who met in Madrid yesterday to talk about Basque tax incentives.

A gunman shot the Supreme Court magistrate Rafael Martinez Emperador in the head outside his home in Madrid's smart Salamanca district at lunchtime. The victim was dead on arrival at hospital.

Hours earlier, a remote-controlled bomb blew up a camouflaged truck carrying military and civilian staff into the Armilla airbase, on the outskirts of the southern city of Granada. The blast killed a barber, Domingo Puente Marin, and wounded eight, two of whom remain seriously ill in hospital.

In Mallabia, near the Basque city of Bilbao, police announced the death, which they thought to be suicide, of a leader of Herri Batasuna (HB), the party linked to the separatist organisation Eta.

HB identified him as Eugenio Aranburu, a member of the party's executive, who was due to appear before the Supreme Court yesterday afternoon. Mr Aranburu was among 25 HB leaders summonsed by the Supreme Court to testify about a videotape issued by the party during last year's election campaign.

The authorities confiscated the tape, saying that it promoted violence. Five HB leaders were imprisoned last week for ignoring the Supreme Court summons – the party has never recognised Spanish courts.

Mr Aranburu's death follows the mysterious death on Friday of an Eta suspect, Jose Maria Aranzamendi, who was found hanged in his prison cell at Alcala-Meco in Madrid. The authorities let 48 hours elapse after Aranzamendi's death before revealing that his hands had been tied behind his back. A post-mortem examination concluded that he committed suicide, and the Interior Ministry insisted yesterday that he tied his own feet and hands before killing himself. His family have demanded a second autopsy.

Aranzamendi was arrested nearly two years ago, suspected of belonging to an Eta commando group. His death unleashed a wave of violence throughout the Basque country at the weekend, where protest demonstrations in a number of towns erupted into riots and street clashes with the police, causing several injuries.

His funeral on Sunday at Elorrio near Bilbao turned into a fierce demonstration against the government's policy of dispersing Eta prisoners in jails throughout Spain. One of Eta's perennial demands is for all their prisoners to be brought nearer home – something the government has been implementing in a halting and piecemeal fashion with selected prisoners considered to be low-risk.

Yesterday's attacks have blown to pieces any attempt for the moment to solve the problem of the Basque violence through dialogue, an objective Mr Ardanza, the conservative Basque Nationalist Party government leader, is always seeking discreetly to broach with Madrid.

Even the Basque church said at the weekend that it was discussing the possibility of calling for talks between the government in Madrid and Eta as a way towards solving a conflict that has claimed more than 800 lives since 1968.

But the Justice Minister, Margarita Mariscal de Gante, yesterday reiterated the government's position that talks were out of the question. Eta, she said, "wants to kill, not to talk".

Recent events, which include the assassination of a military officer in Madrid last month, accompanied by HB warnings that further violence was imminent, suggest that Eta for the moment favours the hard line over the pursuit of dialogue.

The conservative government of Mr Aznar seems as unable to deal with the problem as its predecessors.

Aznar: Was considering tax incentives for Basques

significant shorts

Greece and Turkey could 'go back to war'

War between Greece and Turkey is a "serious possibility", the Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, has warned.

Mr Rifkind told BBC Radio 4's *File on Four* last night that Greece and Turkey could "end up going back to war again" if the Cyprus crisis and the dispute over ownership of islands in the Aegean is not resolved quickly. Asked whether there was a prospect of conflict between the two countries in the Aegean, Mr Rifkind said there had been "a real lack of political will on both sides", and added: "[Conflict] has to be a serious possibility." **Press Association**

Whitewater rises

James McDougal, President Bill Clinton's former partner in the failed Whitewater real-estate venture, has changed his story in a bid to avoid jail and has told prosecutors that Mr Clinton attended a meeting in which an illegal loan was discussed, the *New Yorker* said on Sunday. Mr McDougal told the magazine that Mr Clinton was present at a 1986 meeting in which an illegal $300,000 (£180,000) loan to Mr McDougal's then wife Susan was discussed with David Hale, a businessman who specialised in loans involving the Small Business Administration. **Reuters – New York**

Verdict in 'Crown Heights' trial

A federal court jury convicted Lemrick Nelson Jr and a second defendant, Charles Price, of violating the civil rights of a Jewish scholar from Australia who was slain during 1991 racial rioting in New York. The verdict climaxed a trial that began four years and two months after Nelson was acquitted by a state jury of fatally stabbing Yankel Rosenbaum, 29, a Hasidic history student. **AP – New York**

Britain supports Serb students

Britain threw its weight behind 20,000 protesting Belgrade students who kept up pressure on Serbia's authoritarian president, Slobodan Milosevic, as parliament prepared to reinstate opposition election gains.

In more evidence of Western displeasure with Mr Milosevic, the British Ambassador to Yugoslavia, Ivor Roberts, visited the student leadership and handed them two personal computers. **Reuters – Belgrade**

Croats open fire on Muslims

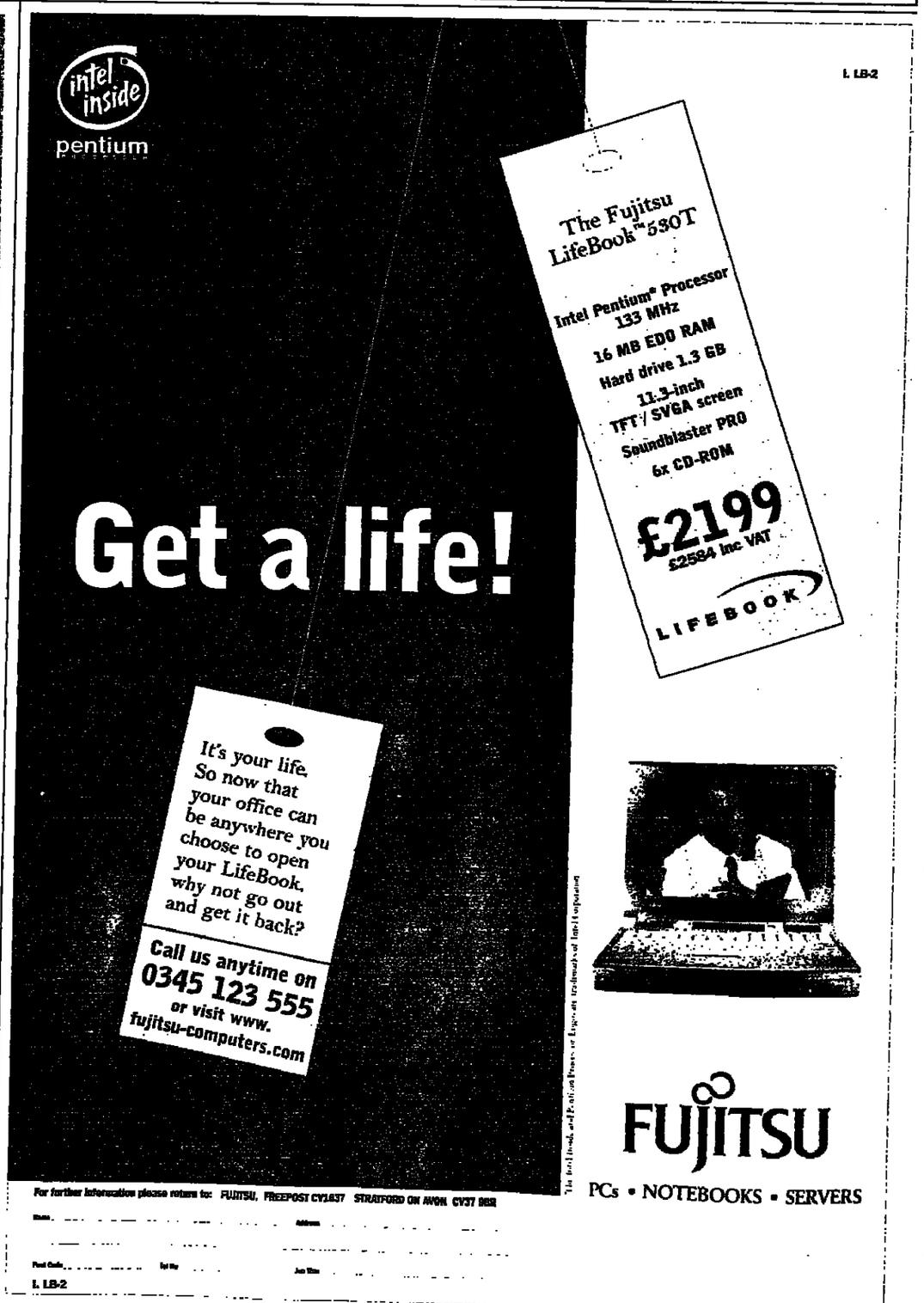
Croats opened fire on Muslims visiting a cemetery in the divided city of Mostar, Bosnia-Herzegovina, a United Nations official said. Officials reported one person dead and about 40 hurt. The shooting incident on a Muslim holiday occurred after days of increased tensions. **AP – Sarajevo**

Riots hit Chinese town

Crowds of young Muslims beat people to death and set cars alight during pro-independence riots in far-western China, a policeman said. Reported casualty figures varied from at least four people dead to nearly 300. The riots last week were the worst to hit Yining, in the province of Xinjiang, since the 1949 Communist takeover, police said. **AP – Peking**

Suicide bid backfires

Max Dadashvili was drinking coffee at a café in Tel Aviv when a would-be suicide dropped through the roof. Mr Dadashvili, 26, ended up in hospital with a broken back. The 72-year-old man who jumped on him from three storeys was unscathed. "I looked very carefully before I leapt to make sure I wouldn't fall on somebody," he told the *Yedioth Ahronoth* newspaper. **Reuters – Jerusalem**



هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاصل

Albanian rioters seize port of Vlora

Andrew Gumbel

A furious crowd of anti-government demonstrators effectively seized control of the southern Albanian port of Vlore yesterday, stripping riot police of their guns, their riot gear and even their clothes as they rampaged through the streets demanding the resignation of the government and the return of money invested in failed "pyramid" schemes.

After five days of increasingly tense demonstrations in Vlore, the city descended into anarchy as gunshots rang out periodically, wrecked cars and oil drums were rolled out in the street and set on fire and piles of rubble and police uniforms were amassed and turned into giant bonfires.

At least three people were reported dead and around 100 injured, almost all hit by stones. One of the dead was shot in the back and died on the operating table at the city hospital. The two others were said to have died of heart attacks, but at least one of them was seen admitted to hospital with blood running down his face and body following a severe beating.

The uniformed police, who numbered no more than 100, were no match for the fury of the crowd. Many of them ran into side alleys, where the luckier ones were offered shelter in private houses and the rest had their clothes torn off them piece by piece. Others took refuge on the city rooftops and attempted to intimidate the crowds by dropping stones into the street.

The demonstrations in Vlore were the direct result of the collapse of Gjallica, the latest of Albania's pyramid investment schemes, which was based locally. In most of the rest of the country, the population has been cowed into fearful silence by a wave of arrests and beatings, but in Vlore the government now seems to have lost any semblance of authority.

The port is a booming Mafia town, the main entry and exit point for contraband including cigarettes, guns, drugs and immigrants en route to Western Europe, so it is used to considering itself above the law.

People across the country believe the government took an active part in the pyramid schemes and was responsible for duping people into believing that they could continue paying extravagantly high rates of interest to investors.

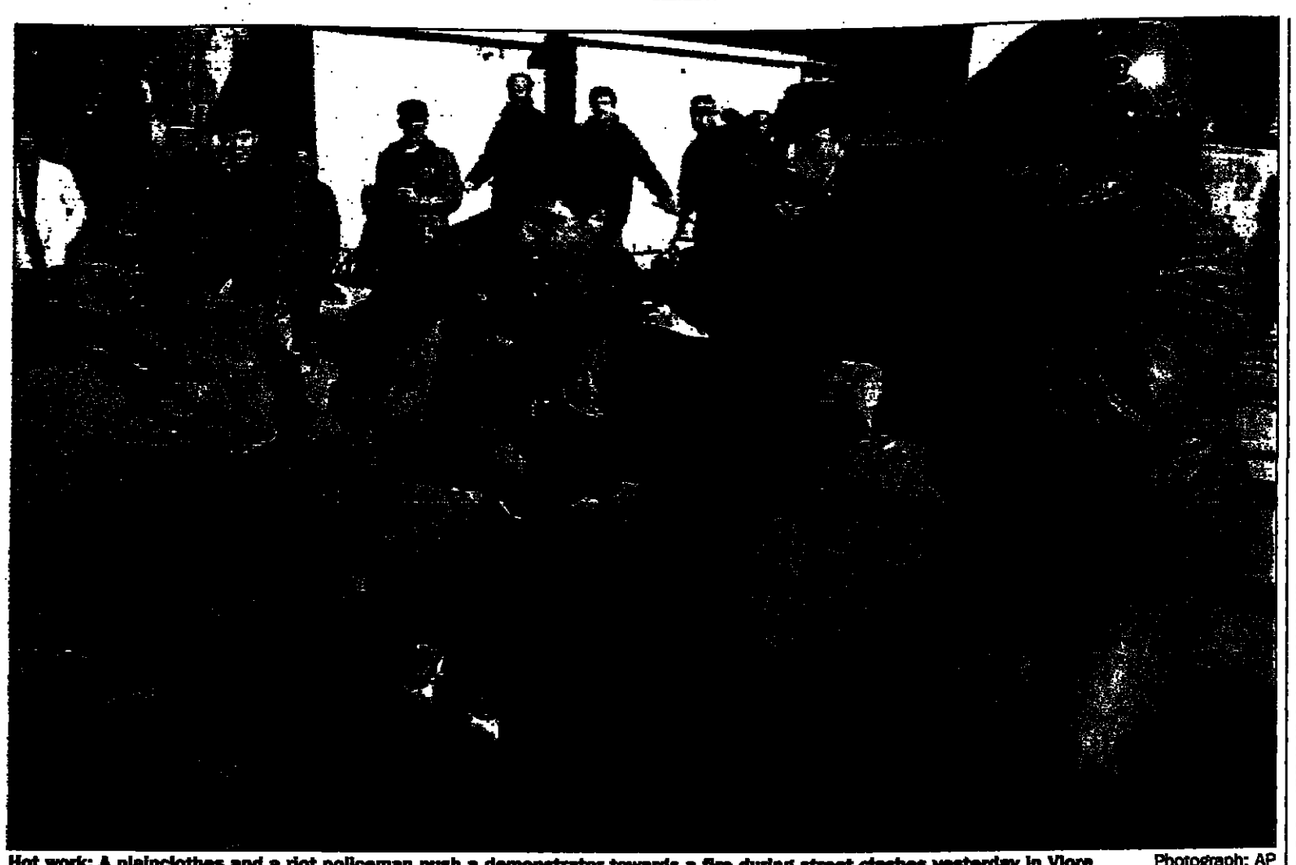
As many as a million Albanian households – effectively the entire country – are believed to have committed money to the schemes.

President Sali Berisha and his government have been entirely unsuccessful in deflecting blame for the crisis, and their promises to pay back some of the money have done little to quell public dissatisfaction.

It is not clear whether the rest of the country will be inspired to follow Vlore's example, or whether the real crunch will wait until the biggest of the pyramid schemes, officially still in business, are declared bankrupt in their turn.

The government has offered to open talks with the opposition, but the offer has been overshadowed by a climate of fear in the capital, Tirana.

Dissidents and opposition politicians have been systematically intimidated and attacked in the past few weeks, and on Sunday the leader of the small Democratic Alliance party, Neritan Ceka, was whacked across the face with a truncheon in a Tirana cafe and some of his friends dragged outside and beaten.



Hot work: A plainclothes and a riot policeman push a demonstrator towards a fire during street clashes yesterday in Vlore Photograph: AP

China elevates HK leader

Stephen Vines
Hong Kong

Tung Chee-hwa, the leader of Hong Kong's first post-colonial government, is said to have been given state leadership status by China's ruling Communist Party. This places Mr Tung in a category normally reserved for those at or above the position of Politburo members or vice presidents.

A report in the *Hong Kong Standard* newspaper yesterday stated that Mr Tung had been selected to join this select group by the Communist Party in Peking. Mr Tung's office refused to comment on the report.

Circumstantial evidence, such as the level of the reception Mr Tung receives when he is in China, and his treatment in China's state-controlled media, suggest that the report is sound.

It means that Hong Kong's new leader is theoretically able to rub shoulders with China's president and Communist Party general secretary Jiang Zemin, and even the paramount leader Deng Xiaoping since the term "state leader" is bestowed on holders for life.

The designation of Mr Tung as a state leader also confirms the very high level of importance the Chinese leadership is attaching to the resumption of sovereignty on 1 July. It may mean that Hong Kong's new leader has considerably more clout in Peking than the average provisional leader.

On the other hand, attacks on state leaders are treated as subversion in China. If this is applied to criticism of Mr Tung, it will represent a considerable diminution of freedom of speech in Hong Kong where abuse of leaders is routine, and where, at a recent demonstration, an effigy of Mr Tung was burned for the first time.

■ Reuters — Hong Kong's largest foreign community, the 140,000 Filipinos who work mainly as maids, received assurances yesterday that they would not lose out after the British colony reverts to China. Jose de Venecia, a Philippine congressman, said he obtained the assurances during a meeting with Tung Chee-hwa.

Japan beckons to an impoverished 'Queen Mary'

Tim Cornwell
Los Angeles

Deborah Prussel speaks of the *Queen Mary* with a sense of patriotic ownership in a vessel that was once the pride of British shipping. It is bad enough that the 61-year-old liner is now the back drop for dockside bungee-jumping. "Queen Mary must be turning in her grave at that one," she said. But worse, far worse, is the notion of floating the one-time Second World War troopship to Tokyo Bay, 30 years after her final voyage, for use as a gambling den.

Mrs Prussel and other residents of Long Beach are up in arms. An acrimonious meeting is promised tonight when the Long Beach city council meets to consider the proposal of a local businessman Joseph Prevratil to send the *Queen Mary* to Japan.

Mr Prevratil operates the ship as a floating hotel under lease from the city, and says the trip would raise cash for urgent repairs. But residents fear the *Queen Mary*, gutted of her engines when Long Beach bought her as a tourist attraction in 1967, could sink.

Even if Mr Prevratil could pull off his scheme, they are worried she will never come back. "We don't want her going to Japan, pure and simple," said Mrs Prussel, a board member of the Long Beach Historical Society. "There are serious concerns about whether she would make it."

The *Queen Mary* was launched in 1936 by the Cunard-White Star line, and soon established the world record for the fastest Atlantic crossing. She boasted excellent food and celebrity passengers well into the Sixties, but by the end of the decade she was losing money, and before the journey to California her fittings were auctioned off. According to Mr Prevratil, her electrical, plumbing and air-conditioning systems are on their last legs. She has swallowed up $100m (£62.5m) in private and public money.

Mr Prevratil, 59, announced his plans at a news conference in the ship's grand ballroom late last month. Sending her to Japan for just three to five years would raise an urgently needed $40m, he said. The ship was so seaworthy, he insisted, that Lloyd's of London was prepared to insure it.

Under Mr Prevratil's stewardship the *Queen Mary* last year turned a profit for the first time. All of the ship's 365 rooms are now open, at prices from £50 to several hundred dollars, with two award-winning restaurants.

But the ship has also become part of the landscape in Long Beach. It is host to many functions, and it is part of social and official life. Sitting at the mouth of the Los Angeles River, it is virtually impossible for a visitor to miss. Many are reluctant to see it go, including city councillor Mike Donelon. "It would leave a black hole if it was gone," he said.

The *Queen Mary* leaving Southampton for the last time 30 years ago, set for her new role as a Long Beach tourist attraction

Memories of 1982 cloud Israel's Lebanon dilemma

Patrick Cockburn
Jerusalem

A measure of Israeli divisions over what to do about Lebanon is a furious row between right-wing leaders over Israel's disastrous invasion of it northern neighbour in 1982, which left 650 Israelis and 13,000 Lebanese dead.

General Ariel Sharon, a member of the present government who was minister of defence 15 years ago, is suing the Israeli daily *Haaretz* for saying that Menachim Begin, then the Israeli prime minister, had believed General Sharon had lied to him about advancing all the way to Beirut.

Giving evidence against General Sharon is Ze'ev Begin, son of the former prime minister, who told the court that his father, who died in 1992, had given his assent to a more limited operation. Mr Begin, who resigned from Israeli cabinet over the Hebron withdrawal last month, said his father denied General Sharon's claim to have told him that Beirut was the initial objective. He said his father "was very angry", and said: "These things are baseless."

Menachim Begin: Believed General Sharon lied

General Sharon has always been held responsible by the Begin family for the invasion which led to Menachim Begin's resignation. It is also true, however, that the prime minister gave his defence minister full backing in his bombardment of Beirut and the capture of the city. The massacre of more than 700 Palestinians at Sabra and Chatilla refugee camps by Christian militiamen allied to Israel discredited the invasion internationally.

Israel has never wholly recovered in Lebanon from the débâcle. It failed to achieve any of its aims of marginalising the Palestine Liberation Organisation, reducing Syrian influence in Lebanon and establishing a Christian Lebanese government allied to Israel. In the face of guerrilla attacks, Israeli forces pulled back to a nine-mile wide security zone in south Lebanon in 1985.

Last week's collision of two helicopters, in which 73 soldiers and airmen were killed on their way to outposts in Lebanon, has given impetus to the debate about whether Israel should withdraw. Yossi Beilin, the architect of the Oslo accord, suggested that control of the security zone be handed over to a third party. The problem with this is that Syria will not let Israel off the hook in south Lebanon without an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, captured in 1967.

Benjamin Netanyahu, the Pprime Minister, and Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, the chief of staff, oppose a pullout but do not have any alternative strategy to propose. A senior officer was quoted as saying: "The public debate now being carried out that concerns an IDF [Israeli army] withdrawal from Lebanon negatively affects the morale of the officers and soldiers serving in the south Lebanon sector."

The prolonged bombardment of Lebanon by Israeli artillery and planes in operation Grapes of Wrath last year failed to inflict significant damage on Hizbollah guerrillas. The US-brokered ceasefire stopped Katyushas being fired at northern Israel, but also stopped Israel freely using its advantage in firepower against Hizbollah. No civilians have been killed on either side for six months. Expansion of the security zone or attacks on Syrian positions in Lebanon would lead to renewed Katyusha attacks.

The several hundred Hizbollah guerrillas Israel faces in Lebanon have proved highly effective. Even in a skirmish at the weekend, in which a three to five man Hizbollah squad was intercepted by Israeli troops, the result was seven Israeli wounded, one seriously, and no evidence of any Hizbollah casualties. The trickle of Israeli casualties, totalling 68 dead in the last three years, makes it difficult for the government to persuade the public that it has no option but to soldier on.

Landslide win for Sikhs in Punjab

Jawed Naqvi
Reuters

Chandigarh — A Sikh party was poised yesterday to rule India's Punjab state for the next five years after a landslide victory in the first peaceful elections in nearly two decades.

The Akali Dal, led by the former chief minister, Prakash Singh Badal, and its ally the right-wing Hindu Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won an overwhelming four-fifths of the 117 seats in the state legislature.

"The Hindus dominate the cities. The BJP is their major mouthpiece. Sikhs dominate the countryside. The combination is formidable," said Ashis Nandy, an analyst at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi.

It was a significant win for the Sikh party, which won a dominant 74 seats after boycotting the last Punjab elections in 1992. The state's ruling Congress party was reduced to only 14 seats.

Some 69 per cent of the state's 15 million voters had turned out for Friday's polls, in sharp contrast with 1992 when 22 per cent voted in an election overshadowed by Sikh separatist violence.

A rival, pro-separatist faction of the Akali Dal won just one seat in yesterday's final tally. Its leader, former police official turned militant, Simranjit Singh Mann, was defeated.

Mr Badal, 69, is expected to take office as Punjab's chief minister later this week.

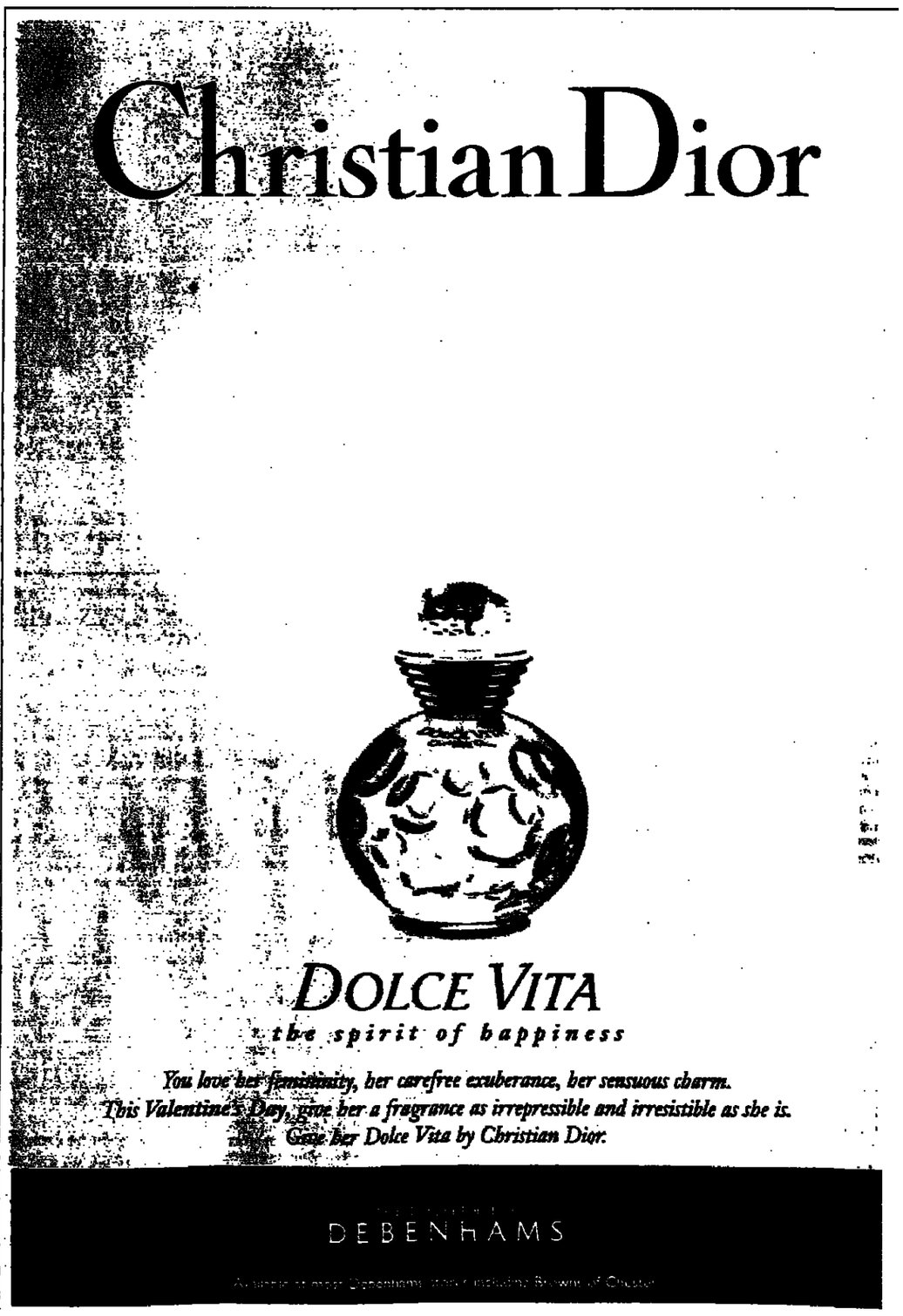
The rich farming region bordering Pakistan has been rocked by years of guerrilla violence. Analysts said the Akali Dal's poll alliance with the BJP offered Sikhs and Hindus a chance to overcome the distrust. "The Akalis never encouraged militancy. They were soft on the militants. The militancy was the handiwork of groups which were opposed to the Akalis," Mr Nandy said.

The landslide victory should reduce pressure on Prime Minister Deve Gowda's United Front alliance, analysts said yesterday. The once-monolithic Congress Party governs only six of India's 26 states and has been reduced to a reluctant supporter of the country's fractious ruling centre-left coalition.

The analysts said Congress was expected to scale down its frequent threats to topple the United Front alliance, which took power last June, and force mid-term elections at the national level.

"The Congress will simply have to pause," said Surjit Grewal, a political analyst in Punjab's capital, Chandigarh. "The lesson in Punjab is that the Congress is extremely unpopular here. The scene can't be much brighter for it in other regions."

Akali Dal leaders said the Punjab election also held a lesson for the BJP. "The BJP should now realise the benefits of having the support of minorities," said Akali Dal spokesman Kanwaljit Singh. "I do believe the party has to seek a policy of moderation if it truly wants to govern India."



obituaries / gazette

Brian Connolly

The music business is full of rags-to-riches stories. It's also an incredibly difficult and destructive environment to operate in. Brian Connolly, the blond lead singer with the Seventies glam-rockers Sweet, saw both sides of the coin. His band sold over 50 million records, but he fell from grace and ultimately couldn't capitalise on the recent renewed interest in all things glitter.

Born in Hamilton, near Glasgow, in 1949, Connolly was probably the half-brother of the actor Mark McManus (who played the Scottish television detective Taggart). The young Brian was fostered by the McManus family, having been abandoned by his mother as a baby; however, when he moved to Middlesex in his teens, he dropped the surname McManus in favour of Connolly. (Rumours persisted that his father was "Mark's dad. I think Mark was my half-brother." Whatever the truth behind their common lineage, he and Mark McManus both later admitted their resemblance to each other was uncanny.) Connolly studied to become an engineer but music was more of an attraction for a youngster keen to make his mark on the world.

The Home Counties were a hotbed of musical talent and Connolly soon replaced Ian Gillan (later with Deep Purple) in a Harrow-based cover band called Wainwright's Gentlemen. In 1968, along with the drummer Mick Tucker and bass-player Steve Priest, Connolly formed the psychedelically named Sweetshop. The group shortened its name, changed guitarists as often as it swapped record labels (Fontana, Parlophone) and only stabilised with the arrival of Andy Scott in 1970.

Signing with RCA the following year, the band hooked up with the producer Phil Wainman and songwriters Nicky Chinn and Mike Chapman, who immediately came up with a poppy, lightweight formula not dissimilar to Mungo Jerry and Middle of the Road. Pretty soon, "Funny Funny", "Co-Co" and "Poppa Joe" were nudging into the British charts. Soon, with Sweet making numerous television appearances covered in glitter, make-up and warpaint, the rest of Europe and the United States fell for simplistic ditties like "Little Willy" and "Wig Wam Bam". But the group already felt trapped in a gimmicky image which didn't quite match their musical ambitions. In a bid to bridge the gap between the successful hits and the hard-rocking B-sides the band had always written, Chinn and Chapman came up with the riotous "Blockbuster". Based on a wailing siren and a classic guitar riff (very similar to David Bowie's "Jean Genie", which also came out on RCA in January 1973), the song reached No 1.

The similarly raucous intros to "Hellraiser", "Ballroom Blitz" (complete with Brian enquiring "Are you ready, Steve, Mick, Andy?") and "Teenage Rampage" provoked many a stampede towards crowded dancefloors and Sweet's saucy stage antics earned them a ban from the Mecca night-club circuit. After the anthemic "Six Teens", the group decided to distance themselves from their Svengali songwriters, who were now also penning material for Suzi Quatro and Smokie.

The *Sweet Fanny Adams* (1974) and *Desolation Boulevard* (1974) albums were full of the band's own compositions (the infectious "Fox on the Run" – a million-seller in the United States – and the catchy "Action" later covered by Def Leppard) and heralded a rather successful change of style. Sweet missed out on a support slot with The Who at Charlton Football Ground in the mid-Seventies which could have confirmed their move towards a more credible status. American success also came at a price; Kiss virtually borrowed Sweet's sound and look wholesale, adding even more gimmicks and eventually stealing the British group's thunder.

Just as punk was discovering its glitter roots (the Damned toured with Marc Bolan and T-Rex and later recorded "Ballroom Blitz"), Sweet were playing the tax exiles, taking drugs and drinking while recording in France and Germany ("Give us a Wink" proved the *double entendres* were starting to wear thin).

In early 1978, a switch from RCA to Polydor saw the band back in the charts with the progressive "Love is Like Oxygen". Unfortunately, both the *Level Headed* (1978) and *Cut Above the Rest* (1979) albums flopped and the musicians argued more than ever. The guitarist Andy Scott and Connolly were at loggerheads, with the singer convinced that the rest of the band had recorded backing tracks in a key he patently couldn't reach. In 1979, Connolly left to attempt a solo career (his single "Hypnotised" didn't set the charts alight) and the others soldiered on for three years without ever recovering their former status. By the late Eighties, Andy Scott and Connolly were both touring with rival versions of Sweet and couldn't bury the hatchet to take advantage of the lucrative reformation offers which came to them from Germany and Japan. Tia Carrera's version of "Ballroom Blitz" became one of the highlights of the soundtrack of the 1992 film *Wayne's World*.

Two years ago, *Don't Leave Me This Way*, a Channel 4 documentary, highlighted the plight of Brian Connolly, who had suffered several heart attacks in 1981. Still clinging to his memorabilia and his dyed blond hair, the vocalist appeared as a shadow of his former self, shaking constantly and walking with a limp. He only came to life when appearing on stage at Butlin's to sing "Blockbuster".

Pierre Perrone

Brian Connolly, singer and songwriter: born Hamilton, Lanarkshire 5 October 1945; married (two daughters; marriage dissolved; one son by Jean Dibble); died Slough 10 February 1997.

Saucy stage antics: Sweet (from left) in 1975 – Andy Scott, Brian Connolly, Steve Priest and Mick Tucker Photograph: PA

Gwen Mullins

Gwen Mullins was one of the leading figures in the modern British crafts movement, both as a weaver and a patron.

She grew up in a very different environment. Her father was of Russian-German origin and the senior partner in a family merchant bank, Wm Brandt and Sons. Her mother was an American, from Georgia, who insisted on ignoring the English climate by dressing her daughter – Southern style – all in white. Thanks to the mud of a Surrey garden, the child's clothes would be changed three times a day by her personal maid. From the London house in Kensington, Gwen was driven to school each day in a pony-trap. At weekends the first family car would stop on Putney Hill on the drive home from London to Bletchingley so that the chauffeur could light the headlamps.

From this rich and somewhat stifling world she escaped to Italy after leaving school, an experience which aroused in her a passionate love of art and a deep and lasting response to the romance of ancient places. On her return to England she began to paint and draw, withdrawing as much as possible from the intensive social life which was a feature of the family home, and occasionally keeping her parents on their toes by threatening to join the family bank.

Though she continued to paint for much of her life, it was a course at the London School of Weaving which awakened a lifelong involvement with the crafts. Meanwhile, at the age of 21, she had married Claud Mullins, then a barrister, and soon to become an outspoken London magistrate and distinguished writer on prison reform.

Preoccupation with a husband and three children checked her activities as a weaver for a number of years. Then, with the onset of the Second World War, she undertook voluntary work in the occupational therapy unit of Horton Hospital, near the Mullins home in Epsom; here she set up looms for the soldiers and put to use some discarded bookbinding equipment. As a result, she began to develop a further crafts skill, aided by a professional bookbinder who was teaching at Epsom School of Art.

In 1948, after Claud retired from the bench, Gwen and her family moved to the village of Graffham in West Sussex, where she established a bookbinding group for local people. Out of this enterprise emerged the more ambitious project for a village crafts workshop, set up in disused farm buildings at the end of her garden, and offering opportunities for basket-making and woodwork as well as spinning, dyeing and weaving. Together with her younger daughter Barbara, she also organised Saturday morning sessions for children in pottery and weaving, the success of which led Barbara to set up week-long summer camps.

Gwen Mullins's own interests became increasingly focused on weaving, including spinning and dyeing, with special emphasis on vegetable dyes made from local plants. The immediate outcome was Graffham Weavers, which developed into a flourishing cottage industry, with several local women becoming highly skilled weavers, and training opportunities being offered to students from art colleges in Britain as well as from Norway, Sweden and Germany. The output of Graffham Weavers burgeoned, with exhibitions of rugs, blankets and clothing held twice yearly (the most recent was two months ago) and an ever-widening clientele from both home and abroad. Commissions included woven hangings for the choir and altar of Worcester Cathedral, a cope and mitre for the then Bishop of Ripon, and rugs for student rooms in Exeter College, Oxford.

As a weaver, Mullins found the greatest pleasure in making knotted pile rugs in richly coloured wools, their designs frequently based on landscape and architectural forms which she had sketched on her walks and travels. These rugs were her most personal achievement as a craftswoman, and were widely exhibited in London, Paris and Edinburgh.

Being privileged herself, Mullins was acutely aware that most craftspeople, particularly the young, enjoyed few such advantages. Materials were expensive, and could be hard to come by. She set up Craftsman's Mark, an organisation aimed at helping hand-weavers who were keen to use natural, undyed wools. Selected fleeces from different varieties of sheep would be bought direct from wool staplers and then spun to her specifications before being kept in store until weavers wished to purchase them, often by mail order.

She established, too, the Gwen Mullins Trust, to finance training and apprenticeship schemes for young craftspeople, and give them grants to buy equipment to set up their own studios and workshops; in the early 1960s there was no public money available for the crafts. Among those who benefited were the now-celebrated weaver Peter Collingwood, the potter Janice Tchalenko, the jeweller Gillian Packard and the weaver Mary Farmer, who now teaches at the Royal College of Art.

Mullins: cottage industry

It was this selfless display of private patronage which helped stir demand for a government-funded body which would do for the crafts in Britain what the Arts Council had long been doing for the visual arts. The first result was the establishment of a Crafts Advisory Committee in 1971, with which Gwen Mullins was closely involved. Then in 1977 this developed into a fully blown Crafts Council, with exhibition space in central London and a card-index and photo library of living craftsmen's work.

Mullins by this time had retired from all public activities to concentrate on her own work and on the running of Graffham Weavers with her daughter Barbara. But in 1975 her contribution to the crafts was officially recognised with her appointment as OBE – to her modest embarrassment.

She continued to weave well into her eighties, until arthritis and failing eyesight made this impossible. Only her garden remained accessible to her, and she would sit out in it even in midwinter, dressed like an eskimo.

Jeff Lowe

Elizabeth Gwendolen Brands, weaver: born London 10 April 1904; OBE 1975; married 1925 Claud Mullins (died 1968; one son, two daughters); died Midhurst, Sussex 20 January 1997.

Penny Wallace

Penny Wallace was the formidable daughter of a formidable father, the phenomenally prolific and popular thriller writer Edgar Wallace, who in his heyday (the inter-war years) was the author of one in every four books bought in the United Kingdom. When he died, in 1932, the nation mourned. Much of Penny Wallace's later life was dedicated to keeping his name alive in the memories of older readers, in the Edgar Wallace Society (launched in 1968), and introducing new generations to his riveting and often torrentially paced thrillers. In this she was remarkably successful.

Born in 1923, she was the only child of Wallace's late second marriage to his erstwhile secretary, Violet King (known to most as "Jim"). Her childhood verged on the idyllic: she was petted by her much older stepsister and stepbrothers and, because her father died when she was only eight, never experienced Wallace's notoriously unbridled exasperation with post-pubertal teenagers.

Without warning, however, the idyll was shattered when Wallace died suddenly in Hollywood while working on the original screenplay of *King Kong*, leaving debts of £140,000. Thanks to some fast financial footwork by his friend and barrister Sir Patrick Hastings, within a couple of years the estate was solvent and paying out huge dividends from Wallace's book and play royalties. This saved the family's fortunes and enabled Penny to be educated (at Roedean) in a manner which Wallace (himself self-educated and illegitimate, and who invariably replied to fellow journalists keen on including him in articles on the origins of celebrated writers, "Sorry, cock, I'm a bastard!") would certainly have relished.

Penny had the Wallace chin, the Wallace nose and the Wallace unstoppability. This last came in enormously useful in her career as an organiser: few could resist for long her gently prodding you towards the course she wanted you to follow.

She was attracted to her father's trade and became a pillar of the Society of Woman Journalists, achieving the Chairship in 1982. By this time she had already whipped the old Press Club (now the London Press Club) into shape, having joined as soon as the club allowed in women members (in 1972), and swiftly become its Social Secretary, then Deputy Chair, much to the consternation (in some cases outright horror) of the more embalmed of its members. In 1980 she was voted Chair: the first woman to be so honoured, as well as the first "second generation" Chair, since her father had attained that position the year Penny was born.

She championed Public Lending Right, and was a long-time member of the Crime Writers' Association, successfully organising the first Crime Writers' International Congress in 1975 (the centenary of her father's birth), then serving as Chair for 1980/81.

Her own writing had verve and movement (one of her short stories, "Tell David", was filmed in Hollywood for the *Night Gallery* television series), although her modernisings of her father's more popular thrillers largely drained the originals of their essential character. Four of her novels were only published in Germany, while a fifth, the female-in-peril suspenser *A Clutch of Bastards*, came out in the UK in 1988.

Penny Wallace was generous in her loyalties (especially to those who championed her father's writings) and had a larky streak (for speakers at conferences she advocated use of a peashooter on sneezing audience members); she also had strong opinions. In her late husband, the entrepreneurial George Halcrow, she found the ideal partner.

Jack Adrian

Margaret Penelope June Wallace, writer: born London 30 May 1923; married 1955 George Halcrow (died 1994; one son, one daughter); died Oxford 13 January 1997.

Chair of the London Press Club: Wallace by Sallon, 1980

Wally Whyton

I cannot speak for Ollie Beak, but to suggest that Wally Whyton was the creator of the television favourite Pussy Cat Willum is highly misleading, writes **W. A. Nicholas** [further to the obituary by Tony Byworth, 24 January].

This enormously popular puppet was devised, created, characterised, manipulated and voiced by the late Janet Nicholls. The only thing she did not do was construct it. The puppet's success, which led on to other creations, was preponderantly her success.

I collaborated with Janet Nicholls and created the written spin-offs *The Pussy Cat Willum Book*, *The Pussy Cat Willum Diary* and a photo-montage verse-strip which appeared in a long-defunct national tabloid. The character-name copyright is attributed to "Janet Nicholls 1962".

Sir James Fraser, surgeon, died 8 January, aged 72. The founding Professor of Surgery at Southampton University 1970-80; President of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh 1982-85.

The Rev Dom Augustine Morris, died 20 January, aged 91. Joined the Anglican Benedictines in 1923 and was Abbot of Nashdom, Burnham 1948-74.

Births, Marriages & Deaths

BIRTHS

STAINTHORPE: Sarah (née Cummins) and Andy are delighted to announce the safe arrival of Timothy James on 3 February, a brother for Emily and Alexandra.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, telephoned to 0171-293 2011 or faxed to 0171-293 2010, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. Please include a daytime telephone number.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Queen holds an investiture at Buckingham Palace. **The Duke of Edinburgh**, Patron, Outward Bound Trust, attends a dinner at the Hyatt Carlton Tower Hotel, London SW1. **The Duke of York** visits Montserrat, the Leeward Islands. **The Princess Royal**, Patron, Sense – the National Deafblind and Rubella Association, attends a Westminster Communicator Guide Project at Westminster City Hall, London SW1; and as President, Save the Children Fund, attends the Industry and Commerce Group Meeting and presents the Corporate Members Fundraiser Certificates at Buckingham Palace.

Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

Birthdays

Sir John Arbuthnot, former MP, 85; Sir Ronald Arculus, former diplomat, 74; Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Berger, former Bursar, Selwyn College, Cambridge, 72; Professor Marilyn Butler, Rector, Exeter College, Oxford, 60; Sir Alexander Cairncross, former Master, St Peter's College, Oxford, 86; Mr Bevan Congdon, cricketer, 59; Mr James Couchman MP, 55; Mr Christopher Dearnley, organist, 67; Mr Patrick Leigh Fermor, author, 82; Sir Archibald Forster, former chairman and chief executive, Esso UK, 69; Sir Vivian Fuchs, explorer, 89; Mr William Fullerton, ambassador to Morocco and Mauretania, 58; Mr Bryan Gould, Vice-Chancellor, Waikato University, 58; Miss Anne Grege, broadcaster, 57; Mr Win Griffiths MP, 54; Mr Michael Jackson, Controller, BBC 1, and BBC Director of Television, 39; General Sir Jeremy Mackenzie, Deputy Supreme Allied Commander, Europe, 57; Mr Leslie Nielsen, actor, 71; Miss Mary Quant, fashion designer, 63; Mr Burt Reynolds, actor, 61; Baroness Sharples, former director, TVS, 74; Mr Dennis Skinner MP, 65; Miss Kim Stanley, actress, 72; Mr E.W. Swanton, sports writer and BBC commentator, 90; Miss Mary Tregear, art historian, 73; Mr Malcolm Walker, chairman and chief executive, Iceland Group, 51.

Anniversaries

Births: William Henry Fox Talbot, photographic pioneer, 1800; Thomas Alva Edison, inventor, 1847; Joseph Leo Mankiewicz, director, producer and screenwriter, 1909. **Deaths:** Joanna II, Queen of Naples, 1435; Jean-Bernard Léon Foucault, physicist, 1868; John Buchan, first Baron Tweedsmuir, governor-general of Canada and novelist, 1940; Sylvia Plath, poet, 1963. **On this day:** the first weekly weather report was issued by the Meteorological Office, 1878; the Lateran Treaty established an independent Vatican State in Rome, covering 108 acres, 1929; Margaret Thatcher became the first woman leader of a British political party, 1975; in South Africa, Nelson Mandela was released from prison after 27 years, 1990; the Queen agreed to pay tax on her private income, 1993. **Today** is the Feast Day of St Benedict of Aniane, St Caedmon, St Gregory II, Pope, St Lazarus of Milan, St Lucius of Adrianople, St Pascal I, Pope, Saints Saturninus, Dativus, and Others and St Severinus of Agaunum.

Lectures

National Gallery: Stella Gambling, "Fond Farewells (ii): Cézanne, *The Grounds of the Château Noir*", 1pm.
Tate Gallery: Andrew Kennedy, "Turner and the Representation of England", 1pm.
British Museum: Shirley Barlow, "Euripides' Medea: a controversial heroine?", 1.15pm.
RIBA Architecture Centre, London W1: Danny Lane talks about his work, 6.30pm.
Leicester University: Professor Iain Stewart, "Computable in Principle Need Not Mean Computable in Practice", 5.15pm.

Luncheons

Newspaper Conference
The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr Kenneth Clarke QC MP, was the guest of honour and speaker at the Annual Luncheon of the Newspaper Conference held yesterday at the Hilton Hotel, London W1. Mr Bob Podmore, Chairman of the Conference, presided.

Receptions

Corporation of London
The Duke of Gloucester was the guest of honour at a Champagne Reception held yesterday at the Guildhall, London EC2, on the occasion of the Link into Latin America Conference. Sir Alexander Graham, Senior Alderman, Corporation of London, representing the Lord Mayor of London, was the host. Sir Alexander Graham and Mr Alberto Kenyo Fujimori, President of Peru, were the speakers. Mr Ernesto Perez Balladares, President of Panama, also attended.

Dinners

Society of Chemical Industry
Mr K.J. Minton, President of the Society of Chemical Industry, was the host at a dinner held yesterday evening at Lawson House, Runcorn. Lampitt Medals, in recognition of outstanding service to SCI in furtherance of its 1907 Charter objectives, were awarded to Dr D.W. Broad and Professor R.J. Hamilton.

Royal Over-Seas League

Mr Michael O'Connor, Acting Chief Executive of the Millennium Commission, was the guest speaker at a meeting of the Royal Over-Seas League's Discussion Circle held yesterday evening at Overseas House, St James's, London SW1. His subject was "The Millennium – Objective and Plans, and Progress to Date". Mr Leonard Lickorish presided.

Decision to stop export of sperm was flawed

Regina v Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, *ex parte* Blood; Court of Appeal (Lord Woolf, Master of the Rolls, Lord Justice Waite, Lord Justice Henry) **6 February 1997**

Without his written consent, sperm could not lawfully be taken from a comatose man shortly before his death or preserved thereafter for the purpose of inseminating the dead man's wife, and the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority was right to refuse to allow such a procedure to take place in the United Kingdom.

But in also refusing to allow the wife to export the sperm to Belgium, the authority failed to take into account her right, under articles 59 and 60 of the EC Treaty, to receive medical treatment in another member state unless there were good public policy reasons for not allowing this to happen.

The Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by Mrs Diane Blood against the decision of Sir Stephen Brown, President of the Family Division (Law Report, 23 October 1996) who refused her application for judicial review of a decision by the authority.

The applicant and her husband Stephen were married in 1991 and towards the end of 1994 began actively trying to have a child. But in February 1995 the husband contracted meningitis, from which he died. Shortly before his death, two samples of sperm were taken by electro-ejaculation and entrusted to the Infertility Research Trust with a view to enabling the applicant to have her husband's child. But the authority, exercising its regulatory powers under the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990, declined to permit her to receive such treatment either in this country or in Belgium.

Lord Lester of Herne Hill QC, Peter Duffy and Michael Fordham (Leigh Day & Co) for the applicant; David Pannick QC and Dinah Rose (Morgan Bruce, Cardiff) for the authority.

Lord Woolf MR said that in the absence of the consent required by section 12 and Schedule 3 of the 1990 Act, Mr Blood's sperm should not have been preserved or stored. Technically, therefore, an offence had been committed by the licence holder under section 4(1)(b), but there was no question of any prosecution being brought in this case, nor could any criticism be made of the fact that storage had taken place because it had been done bona fide and in consultation with the authority in what was an unexplored legal situtation.

For this reason, the case raised issues as to the lawfulness of the use and export of sperm which would never arise again.

Section 24(4) of the 1990 Act gave the authority a discretion as to when and subject to what conditions to permit any person to whom a licence applied to export sperm in any particular case. The authority had made general directions on this subject, but that did not prevent it making a specific direction permitting export in any particular case.

The authority accepted that under articles 59 and 60 of the EC Treaty Mrs Blood as a member of the Union had a right, directly enforceable by her (and therefore part of English law), to receive medical treatment in another member state. But it contended that its refusal to allow the export of gametes did not amount to infringement of Mrs Blood's right to treatment in Belgium or elsewhere.

That approach did not make sufficient allowance for the reality of the situation. The refusal to permit the export of gametes prevented Mrs Blood having the only treatment which she wanted.

In coming to its decision the authority was required to take into account that to refuse permission to export would impede the treatment of Mrs Blood in Belgium and to ask whether in the circumstances this was justified.

Not having received the appropriate guidance on the law, the authority failed to take into account two important considerations. The first was the effect of article 59. The second was the fact that there should be no further cases where sperm was preserved without consent. The fear of creating an undesirable precedent could not apply here.

However, even taking into account EC law, the authority was not bound to decide in Mrs Blood's favour. But it must direct itself correctly as to the law. The onus was on the authority to provide reasons which met the standards set by European law.

Paul Magrath, Barrister

LAW REPORT
11 February 1997

هكذا من الأصل

It's hard, but Labour must target Del boy

Jack Woolley doesn't look like a Labour voter. With his little Ambridge business, he seems the typical Tory, straight from the village green and warm beer of Major's little England. Del boy is hardly a Blairite either. Rodders and Uncle Albert conceivably stray from their Peckham council estate to vote for Harriet Harman, but surely not Del. That self-made spiv, self-reliant and competitive, ducking the rules and regulations of big government, makes an aspirational Thatcherite. Even Ronnie Barker's Arkwright, his Yorkshire corner shop open all hours, appears no friend to the red flag or red rose.

Assuming our soapy heroes reflect our national culture, things do not look good for Labour's latest campaigning venture. Winning the hearts and minds of small businessmen and women, as Labour claims it wants to do, will not be easy. The cultural objections to Labour run deep, and certain genuine policy differences remain.

Nevertheless, the appeal is worth making. For a start, Labour cannot afford to be too out of touch with the growing band of Trotters and Woolleys in the world. There are too many votes at stake. But even if Mr Blair and Barbara Roche, his small business lieutenant, cannot turn many votes, they will still improve their ability to govern all of us well if they address themselves seriously to small business concerns.

Rural and urban, uneducated and professional, no matter how different their social background, small businessmen and women have always seemed to have one thing in common: voting Conservative. Loathing big government, fiercely self-sufficient and competitive, they formed the bedrock of the parties of the right throughout Europe. The little *rentiers* and the petty bourgeoisie kept the socialists out in France for almost a century. In Spain they helped keep Franco in power. Little business people and left-wing (or even centrist) governments do not seem to go too well together.

But Tony Blair cannot afford to forget them. He needs their votes. Three and a half million people are self-employed. As the world of work gradually changes, as companies downsize and out-source, increasingly the people who once laboured together in unionised workplaces are striking out alone, under contract to their old company. The old Labour voters, shaped by common experience in the factories, are disappearing. If the votes of small businessmen and women seem important now, they will matter far more in future. Labour cannot afford to ignore the lingering perception that it is envious of success, hostile to aspirations, and disapproving of an independent competitive spirit.

Moreover there is no good reason why the interests and values of hard-working small business people should be out of kilter with a left-of-centre party. Del lives in a cramped council flat. His son Damien will have to face Peckham's schools, while Racquel could go out to work and boost the family income if she could only afford good child care. Expanding the opportunities of the little people, defending them against the powerful economic interests (be they big contracting companies or stubborn trade unions), giving them and their children a fair chance to succeed, should all fit neatly within a centre-left framework.

But the economic case for wooing small businesses is even stronger. Rodney and Uncle Albert depend on Del for their living. Half the private sector workforce now have jobs with companies of fewer than 100 employees. The tired cliché that small and medium-sized enterprises are the engine of growth remains true. Squeeze little entrepreneurs and you squeeze the economy. Even if small business leaders insist on disliking Labour values, a Labour government would have to persist in helping small businesses flourish.

For the most part, Labour policies should be perfectly acceptable to small businesses. Pursuing economic stability, cutting red tape, providing small business support all sound comforting enough. Ian Lang, President of the Board of Trade, has issued similar warm words himself. In one area Labour actually has something positive and distinctive to offer small businesses above and beyond current government policies: a statutory right to interest on late payment. For the countless little companies that suffer, scrimp and save, waiting for their bills to be paid by the big bullies who are collecting interest on the balance, this could mean the difference between profit and going under. Perhaps there is substance to Labour's claim that surveys show small businesses now prefer Labour to the Conservatives.

But the sticking point for many small shopkeepers, pub-owners and business entrepreneurs remains the minimum wage. For a small firm with few employees, wavering on the edge of closure, paternity leave, statutory holiday entitlements, and minimum rates of pay all hinder their chances of survival. Tony Blair will well remember answering questions from small business owners (possibly genuine, possibly Tory stooges) who phoned television and radio programmes during the 1992 election to insist that Labour's proposed minimum wage (then £3.20 an hour) would force them to lay off half their staff. Faced with an almost tearful boarding house owner, convinced she will not be able to make ends meet, it is hard to argue that a minimum wage will not cost jobs. The fact remains that some small businesses that survive and compete only through paying staff abysmal rates will be squeezed out of the economy. Labour should not flinch from admitting this. Some small businesses will not get a great deal from a Labour government, nor should they. Sustaining an enterprise on the back of poverty pay is not acceptable, no matter how much the entrepreneur may want to keep going.

Our economy must be able to afford to do better. Understanding the interests of small business is the right way to run a government; pandering to their every plea is not.

ONE CANADA SQUARE CANARY WHARF LONDON E14 5DL
TELEPHONE 0171-293 2000 / 0171-345 2000 FAX 0171-293 2435 / 0171-345 2435

Hard work and other options

Talking of successful small businesses ... the best small businesses of all are those that don't stay small for long, and catapult their successful entrepreneurial owners into the brimming ranks of British millionaires. We now have 81,000 people worth more than thousands of thousands of pounds. Good luck to them – or, at least, to the ones who made it through hard work.

But consider the new millionaires who made money awarding themselves share options on the back of privatisation. And spare a thought for the growing numbers of their employees who aren't paid a minimum wage. Are we sure we're getting the balance quite right?

• LETTERS TO THE EDITOR •

Nato marches east into a great blunder

Sir: "Nato's planned expansion is not inherently threatening to Russia. Given the right circumstances, it should go ahead." So writes Tony Barber ("Forget the Bear, look to the Balkans", 6 February).

Russia does see Nato enlargement as "inherently threatening" – and a betrayal of commitments made by John Major and James Baker at the time of German unification. Clearly "circumstances" aren't right now, but without a proper European security architecture in place, they never will be.

George Kennan is only the latest in a row of British and American former ambassadors to Moscow to warn that "expanding the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation would be the most fateful blunder of American policy in the entire post-Cold War era" (*International Herald Tribune*, 6 February, reprinted from the *New York Times*).

That President Clinton gave promises to Polish and Czech constituencies in the US during his electoral campaign does not bind the rest of us to commit a great folly.

The antagonism the proposal is giving rise to is preventing most of Europe's real problems being addressed. Of which one is, as Tony Barber points out, the future of the Balkans – on which side of a new iron curtain would they fall? Above all, "Nato enlargement" is not free-standing: it is messing up most of the existing and intended arms-control treaties; it is related to, but so far un-coordinated with, European Union expansion; it is likely to be very expensive, but its funding has not been considered; above all, it belongs within the European security framework that the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe provides.

President Chirac, returning from his visit to Mr Yeltsin, has suggested a five-power summit meeting in April for the leaders of the United States, France, Britain, Germany and Russia to discuss Europe's future security system. Which sounds right. Our common European future cannot properly be left in Mr Clinton's hands alone: for that he has, and can have, no democratic mandate.

ELIZABETH YOUNG
London W2

Sir: Paul Vallely ("How Blair can save billions on defence", 10 February) may well be right to say that substantial savings in the defence budget would be possible if Britain either faced up to its dependence on the United States or joined up to a common European defence policy. However, neither option appears realistic, certainly in the near-medium term.

I disagree with Paul Vallely's conclusion that there are "not many more efficiency savings to be made". Significant delays and massive cost overruns in the procurement process persist, and poor MoD management still wastes large sums.

But the more fundamental issue Labour's review would need to address is the balance between commitments and resources. If our armed forces are overstretched and becoming "hollow", and we are not going to increase their numbers, then we must reduce their commitments. If Britain wants an army rather than a gendarmerie it must allow it the opportunity to train as such: if it wants to sustain high morale amongst service personnel, it must honour minimum standards of intervals between operational duties.

There is a danger that we are concentrating too heavily on high-profile new pieces of hardware and neglecting the essential support of that equipment in warfare. What is the point of sustaining hundreds of shiny new tanks if the minute you need to actually use them three-quarters of them do not work, as was discovered before the Gulf War?

Dr STEPHEN PULLINGER
Executive Director
International Security Information Service
London WC2

Survival guide for aid workers

Sir: The recent news that aid workers have been taken hostage by rebels in Tajikistan comes on the back of the tragic news that two aid workers – one Cambodian, one British – have been killed whilst working for the United Nations in Rwanda. These events once again highlight the often dangerous position that aid workers find themselves in.

Because of this, and other factors which relate to the welfare of aid workers, eleven UK aid organisations have come together to form People in Aid, funded by the ODA. The group will address concerns about the recruitment, vulnerability and high levels of stress of aid workers, particularly in disaster and conflict situations.

On 19 February, we will be publishing a Code of Best Practice which seeks to set a quality standard for the management and support given to aid workers in the field.

SARA DAVIDSON
People in Aid
London SW1

Commerce moves to the Internet

Sir: Your recent articles on the Royal Bank of Scotland and Nationwide offering Internet services to their customers (22 January and 3 February) highlight one of the most dramatic changes taking place in the financial services sector – electronic commerce.

IBM research to be published shortly, shows that 72 per cent of insurance executives interviewed believed that electronic commerce will have the most profound impact on reshaping the insurance industry.

Another IBM research project carried out last year, again with insurance executives, highlighted a scenario whereby consumers will actively identify, acquire and manage their portfolios of risk and capital accumulation needs – a simple task in a world where a growing number of access points such as the Internet means everyone is "wired". Increasingly sophisticated consumers will send out requests for coverage over a growing number of access points such as interactive TV and the Internet. They will piece together the necessary product or service components from global providers.

Sadly, there are still many financial service companies who, despite having Web sites, do not have the adequate strategy to maximise opportunities via the Internet and time is running out for them fast. There are currently around 50 million worldwide users of the Internet and it is estimated that this will rise to 1.5 billion by 2010.

JOHN MOON
Distribution Solutions Manager
IBM Insurance Europe
Feltham,
Middlesex

A formula for fair wages

Sir: The political hot potato of limiting high-fliers' salary increases and the soon to be resurrected debate over guaranteed minimum salaries could easily be cooled by a statutory requirement that within any organisation the highest remuneration should not be higher than a prescribed multiple of the lowest salary.

This would give flexibility to an employer but would ensure that, regardless of the total amount available for salaries, the division of that amount would always be such as to reflect the contributions made by all employees. This principle could hold good for both commercial companies and government departments.

The only arguments would then be to determine the correct multiplier (20, 30, 50?) and for middle-earning employees to justify their division of the remainder.

A P DZIMITROWICZ
Croydon,
Surrey

British Empire begins at home

Sir: I hope the new Empire and Commonwealth Museum in Bristol will find room for a more thoughtful account of the term "British Empire" than is apparent from Peter Popham's description (article, 6 February).

For much of the "500-year history" to which the museum's curator alludes, "the British Empire" meant not far-flung dominions but the rule and sovereignty first of England itself, then later of the British Isles in their various political constitutions. As the great G M Young observes, this older sense, with no particular overseas reference, prevailed as late as the 1830s, when McCulloch's *Statistical Account of the British Empire* gave more space to Oxford than Canada (*Victorian England: Portrait of an Age*, p32). It is not until 1857 that we find Thomas Hughes, in *Tom Brown's Schooldays*, celebrating that Empire "on which the sun never sets".

For Henry VIII in 1533, the "realm of England" was "an empire" because that meant it was "free from the authority of any foreign potentates". Today, when the constitution of the United Kingdom is in question, and half England is roused by a perceived European threat to "British" sovereignty, these less glamorous domestic aspects of imperial history have as great a claim on our attention as evocations of the comparatively brief period when maps of the world were covered in red.

ALAN MacCOLL
St Andrews, Fife

Neglect of a colossal work

Sir: I read with interest David Chesterman's letter (5 February) on recent performances of symphonies in London. I too am struck by the apparent neglect of Beethoven's Second Symphony. I can see no good reason why this fine work should have slipped into relative obscurity.

The *Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung*, in its review of the symphony's première in April 1803, describes it as "a singular, colossal work, with a depth, power and artistic erudition such as very few works command".

One could not agree more. The symphony shows the first real emergence of the power and beauty of Beethoven's music, which was to surface fully in his later works. Let's hope it does not drift further into obscurity.

Dr C E JAGUS
Mossley,
Lancashire

Sperm ruling has ancient echoes

Sir: The Court of Appeal's ruling in favour of Mrs Blood's campaign to have a child using her deceased husband's sperm (report, 7 February) has been hailed as a victory for "common sense". It can also be seen as a victory for "family values".

Amongst the ancient Hebrews, and in many patriarchal societies around the world, death does not terminate marriage. A dead man's brother stands in for him, taking his widow as partner, in order to produce children (ideally sons) in his name – a practice known as "levirate", from the Latin *levir*, "brother-in-law".

The presumption here is that men seek to perpetuate themselves through their heirs. They are not expected to leave oral, far less written, legal instructions recording their consent – as the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority appears to require. From this wider cross-cultural perspective, the authority's intervention here seems a bizarre intrusion into what are strictly family issues.

I M LEWIS
Emeritus Professor of Anthropology
The London School of Economics and Political Science
London WC2

Help mentally ill out of ghetto

Sir: At last, a sympathetic and unprejudiced analysis of the crisis of mental health provision in this country (leading article, 5 February).

I am a student, and I also happen to be mentally ill. I am distressed by the almost entirely negative approach of the press. Coverage is biased towards the infrequent violent cases, personal accounts of sufferers are rarely published, and local newspapers are reluctant to publicise horrendously long waiting-list times.

I have had the "luck" to be able to compare the services in three countries: Egypt, Germany and Britain. My experiences and research lead me to agree with your diagnosis. There are cases of depressed children and teenagers in our inner cities who, even after they have attempted suicide, have been put on a three-month waiting list to see a psychiatrist. Some do not survive until their first appointment.

I am living in a grey world of fear, which is haunted by unwanted spectres and thoughts. And I am not alone. Many other people in similar and worse positions than me are feeling ghettoised and stigmatised by society. What we need is a full, frank and empathetic discussion about the chronic underfunding in the mental health sector.

TASHA DIFFEY
Manchester

Fresh spin

Sir: The ideal place for wind turbines is not in our National Parks nor out at sea, nor on London's rooftops (letter, 5 February). It is at Sellafield, Torness and Sizewell.

They're all in windy places with already ugly buildings, not where people want to go bathing – and the transmission lines are already there. Maybe they'll help Nuclear Electric make a profit – or is it against their principles to use a safe source of power?

A A KRAKIEWKZ
Lambley, Nottinghamshire

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number.
Fax: 0171-293 2056; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk).
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

In the next 20 years, the creation of new communities will be an imperative, says Profesor Peter Hall. But there will be opposition from environmentalists – and the Nimby tendency

Milton Keynes multiplied

How can Britain meet the need for another four million homes? Build more new towns, the doyen of planning tells **Peter Popham**

What with the tree people and the tunnel people, Swampy and Animal and the rest, a hasty scanning of the newspapers may give one the impression that development is something which in this country is no longer possible; that every new road or housing estate, every attempt to nudge history forward as opposed to rolling it back, will be met by the thunderous coalition of young eco-warriors and middle-aged Nimbies.

So to hear someone speak out in favour of full-blooded development policies, in favour of a whole panoply of new towns and villages, served by incredibly fast new rail networks but also, no doubt, by some new roads, is rather shocking: like bumping into an advocate of caning or whaling or paedophilia.

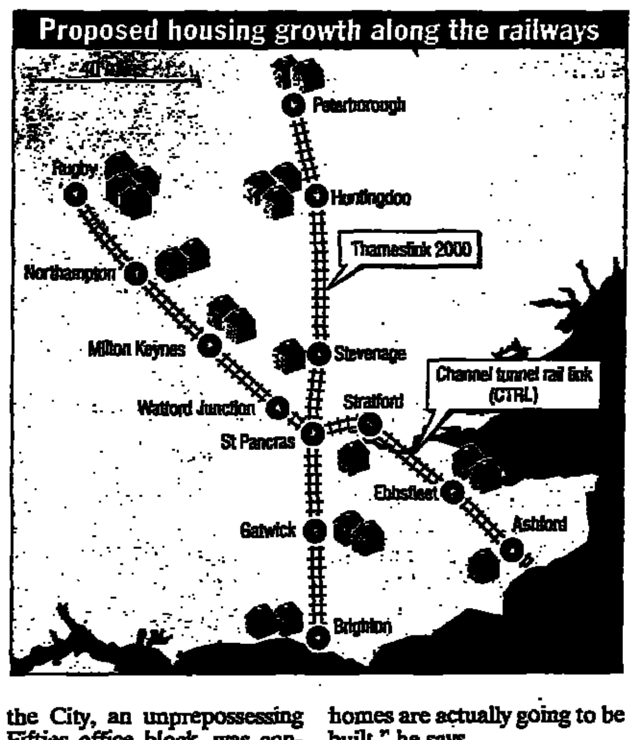
But when the person in question is Professor Peter Hall, doyen of British town planners, former chief planning adviser to Michael Heseltine at the Department of the Environment and now chairman of the Town and Country Planning Association, one sits up and takes notice.

Tomorrow evening at the Royal Institute of British Architecture in London, in a debate entitled *City, Suburb or Country – Who Cares?*, Professor Hall will explain why he thinks a large number of new communities will not merely be desirable in the next 20 years, but imperative. In his view, sizeable new communities are going to come into existence, willy-nilly, and they will come about in a far more coherent and harmonious manner if they are planned. And he will explain how the arrival of TGV-speed trains in south-east England to serve these new communities will also have a powerful regenerative effect on existing towns and cities that now are deep into their various limbos and twilights.

The trigger for these bold imaginings was the prediction last November by John Gummer, Secretary of State at the Department of the Environment, that by 2020 Britain will be confronted by the need to house 4.4 million new households. The bulk, 80 per cent, the DoE believes, will not be young couples but single-person households: young people of student age, the divorced or separated, and older people who have outlived their spouse or partner. However constituted, it is a formidable number of households to accommodate. It is an irresistible force. But it is headed straight for an immovable object, namely the Nimbyish tendency with which Gummer, who represents a rural constituency and lives in a vicarage in Suffolk, is on terms of intimate familiarity.

Deeply in thrall to the absolutist ruralism of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England, Gummer seeks to deflect the irresistible force on to a new (and, praise the mark, fashionable) terrain. Rural England shall remain sacrosanct: if Gummer gets his way, 60 per cent of those 4.4 million households will be decanted into housing in so-called "brown field" sites in the cities – areas of redundant industrial or office buildings, contaminated and derelict land, and so on, which can be converted to residential use.

By suggesting that this is the solution, Gummer has grabbed the coat tails of a real and important trend, namely the revival of the inner city not only as a place to work and play but as a place to live: a historic reversal of the drift to suburban and country living that has been in progress for more than a century. Warehouses and factories, outdated office blocks and ex-seamen's hostels have been imaginatively adapted to residential purposes over the past 10 years, and the trend continues: recently this newspaper's former home north of the City, an unprepossessing Fifties office block, was converted into luxury apartments.



Peter Hall does not decry this tendency; indeed, he seeks to encourage it. But he flatly denies that it can provide the answer to the needs of Gummer's 4.4 million households. "In the South-east, the projections suggest that more than one-third out of the 1.7 million new households should be crammed into London. But the space is simply not there," Hall insists. He estimates that the most promising brown field site in the capital, Thames Gateway (formerly known as the East Thames Corridor), might take 30,000 new homes. "One has to wonder where exactly the remaining 599,400 homes are actually going to be built," he says.

As Professor Hall sees it, there will be no alternative to building new towns in the countryside. This is the nettle that we must grasp. And the good news, in Hall's view, is that certain entirely fortuitous developments in the railway system will make the attainment of what he calls "the sustainable social city" far more capable of realisation than the rest of us in our premillennial gloom are likely to suppose.

Two simultaneous but unrelated rail developments are the key. One is the Channel Tunnel Rail Link (CTRL) being built by London and Continental Railways, on which Hall has been a consultant since leaving the DoE in 1994, which, if and when sufficient investment is attracted, will now extend to Rugby and Northampton as well as connecting the Kent coast with London.

The other element is called Thameslink 2000, to which Railtrack is committed, which will connect Cambridge and Stevenage to destinations south of London. "It will be a very sophisticated service," says Hall, "with trains which will be coming from as far away as Bedford and Kings Lynn feeding into a new station at St Pancras and feeding out to the south coast. It will be a relatively high speed service, with trains travelling at up to 110mph. What you will see with these two schemes is a high-speed metro service of a kind that has hardly existed in the world up to now."

These two new high-speed rail links will provide the infrastructural spines for the new communities Hall envisages. The model for such a development is even now taking shape along the route of the CTRL between St Pancras and the Kent coast, in the East Thames Corridor. It was Heseltine's (and Hall's) vision of how the arrival of a high-speed rail link from the Continent could be exploited to revive that huge swathe of land, from London's East End to decaying seaside resorts such as Margate and Ramsgate, that has been in the doldrums for the past 30 or 40 years. According to Hall, the realisation of this plan shows that it is a mistake to think new town type developments are a thing of the past.

"If you look at the stuff that's going on in Thameside, Kent its really remarkable. Both the county council and the local Dartford council are very pro-development in that area and they have revived the development plan. They've even taken substantial land out of the green belt, the sacred cow of the British planning system. There will be fights even down there – all the tree people and the tunnel people will come out of the trees and into the tunnels. But in general in Thames Gateway, within the corridor, there isn't that opposition."

The idea that urban planning is no longer possible in Britain, that it is a thing of the past, dates from the mid-Eighties: the fact that Mrs Thatcher wanted to get rid of planning was translated into the public perception that she had in fact done so. This impression has been heightened by the apparent anarchy of developments such as Canary Wharf in London's Docklands, which sprang up on her watch.

> ‘A high speed rail link will revive swathes of land’

But, as Hall tells it, Thatcher's trusty nose for survival caused her to backtrack from her ambition to abolish planning, when she realised that to do so would be electorally risky. "Although Maggie Thatcher would undoubtedly have liked to shut the planning system down, and almost said so, she never succeeded. Planning, as a negative device, which it has always really been in many areas – defending the rural acres – was actually allowed to survive because trying to dismantle that protection would have just had them out of office."

Professor Hall proposes to give us a new map of the south of England, full of new towns and villages. Because he is a notorious optimist (it's a rare and refreshing quality), he half convinces us that it is going to happen; that the social idealism which fuelled the new towns movement after the war can be turned on again like a tap.

What the towns will look like is another matter. In the book he wrote in his youth, *London 2000*, first published in 1963, Hall envisaged a metropolis of "beautiful expressways", tall buildings clustering around all the major railway stations, vast pedestrian decks separating traffic from people. Today, while insisting his vision was at least half right, he is far more circumspect about prescribing specific styles or forms for the next 20 years.

Whether the new communities Professor Hall describes will be truly sustainable, is a tough question to answer. Ebenezer Howard's garden city idea, which has inspired Hall throughout his career, was meant to be self-contained and sustainable, but, as Hall admits, all the garden cities and new towns became commuter bases almost as soon as they were built.

True sustainability may as yet be no more than a buzzword, a pious desideratum, which acquires a nasty tinge of authoritarianism (live here! stay put! don't drive!) when anyone tries to put it into effect. But on one point, Hall is clear: however imperfect a planned solution to the problem of Britain's exploding households may be, it will be far more satisfactory than an unplanned one. "If you don't provide adequately, through a coherent regional plan, I think there are going to be two consequences. You'll get a lot of development anyway, but it will be far far worse than if you'd done it properly. You'll get fights going on everywhere, grudging releases of land, probably in the wrong places, not well related to transport, and it will be far worse for everyone than if you had done it properly.

"The second fact is that if you release the land too slowly, the real victims will be the low-income people, who are dependent on social housing, because the market will always operate to give the people with money what they want. The social housing providers won't be able to get the land they need to build the social housing. Or it will be in the worst possible locations: crammed on to contaminated land, badly located, next to noisy railways or roads."

Utopianism may be beyond us these days, jaded as we are. But we can still recognise dystopias like this when they appear on the horizon. The question is whether government will have the vision and resolution to take steps to avoid them.

PAY YOUR MOTOR AND HOME INSURANCE BIT BY BIT, INTEREST FREE.
No large lump sums to pay. No interest to pay. No need to hang about. Call now for details.
GA
General Accident Direct
MOTOR INSURANCE 0800 121 000 • BUILDINGS & CONTENTS 0800 121 004
PAY BY INSTALMENTS INTEREST FREE
MORTGAGE PAYMENT PROTECTION 0800 121 008 • TRAVEL 0800 121 007
Weekdays 8am – 9pm, Sat 9am – 5pm.
*Written details on request. General Accident Direct, FREEPOST, Hamilton ML3 1BR.
http://www.ga.co.uk/gadirect

All at sea with the feel-safe factor

Miles Kington

Whether or not Michael Howard ever gets the power to place bugs on unwitting people, we now know that unauthorised bugging of suspicious people already takes place.

I can actually give you an example.

For the past few weeks a bugging device has been placed experimentally in Michael Howard's office at the Home Office. Nobody knew it was there except, of course, my mole who put it there in the first place.

Judge for yourself whether it was a worthwhile experiment from these extracts from conversations on the tape, chosen carefully at random by me.

TAPE EXTRACT ONE
Mole: Testing, testing, testing. One two three.... Prison works! Put everyone behind bars! Hang the cost! And hang everyone else as well! Right, let's see if that's working ...
Playback: Prison works! Put everyone behind bars! Hang the cost ! ....
Mole: Perfect.

TAPE EXTRACT TWO
1st Aide: What's this meeting going to be all about?
2nd Aide: Search me. He can't be announcing more prisons, can he? There's nowhere left to put them.
1st Aide: Oh, come on – Howard can always think of somewhere else to put more prisoners. On floating hulks, in old holiday camps ....
2nd Aide: Underground at road-building protests ....
1st Aide: What is this mania he has to put everyone behind bars? Hold on – here he comes ....
Howard: Right, gentlemen, without further ado let's get down to business. And we only have one piece of business in front of us. Winning the election!
1st Aide: With the best will in the world, sir, it is no part of a civil servant's brief to help win an election.
Howard: To win the election we have to make people feel they're safe with us. I call it the feel-safe factor! And to do this we have to put various feel-safe factors into operation, such as cracking down on illegal immigrants and keeping Myra Hindley in jail for ever.
2nd Aide: Isn't there a danger that this may turn people in her favour, sir? Do people really think that if she is let out now, she is going to roam the countryside killing people? I mean, not even OJ Simpson has reoffended ....
Howard: Are you disagreeing with me ?
2nd Aide: No, sir. Merely pointing out ....
Howard: And another thing. If we can pin-point a public enemy for people to hate, that will also bring people on our side. I want you to find out who, in the last year, has committed the most offences in British courts. And name him publicly.
1st Aide: But ....
Howard: Do it, you recalcitrant bastards!
Sound of slamming door.
1st Aide: Well, I don't know about you, but I thought he was in an unusually good mood today.

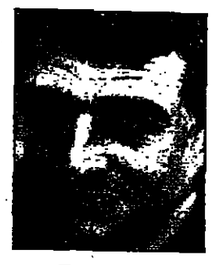
TAPE EXTRACT THREE
Only the two aides are present.
1st Aide: Well, the Myra Hindley announcement hasn't materially altered the opinion polls.
2nd Aide: John ....
1st Aide: Yes ?
2nd Aide: Has it ever occurred to you that Myra Hindley and Michael Howard have the same initials?
1st Aide: No. But why should that ...?
2nd Aide: Well, the Home Secretary seems to have a bit of an obsession with her. I just wondered if in some strange way he identified with her, in a Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde sort of way. The dark side of the moon ... the evil side of his own character ... In their own ways, Hindley and Howard have tried to put away as many people as possible ...
1st Aide: Are you going round the bend ?
2nd Aide: Maybe. Sometimes I think I've been here too long ....

TAPE EXTRACT FOUR
Howard: Well, any progress on the naming of the worst offender of the year ?
1st Aide: Yes, sir. We ran a search on the name singly most criticised by the courts and ... well, bad luck, sir. It's you, sir.
Howard: ME ?
2nd Aide: Yes, sir. Apparently you have been more ruled out of order and in contempt of the law than anyone else this past year.
1st Aide: Shall we put out a press release to that effect?
Howard: No, no ... Just make the announcement that I am buying lots of floating prisons.
1st Aide: Yes, sir. Incidentally, why are we doing this ?
Howard: Because I want to win the next election and I don't want prisoners voting against us.
2nd Aide: But, sir, prisoners don't have the vote anyway.
Howard: I'm taking no chances! I'm putting all the likely Labour voters in off-shore prisons *so that they lose their residential right to vote in Britain as well!* Now, move!
Slamming of door.
1st Aide: Well. What do you say to that ?
2nd Aide: Roll on the election, I say.

More tape extracts soon, unless an injunction descends on my mole.

the commentators

A dangerous game to play with Scotland's future



Donald Macintyre

It doesn't help the Tory case to suggest what is patently implausible: that a future Tory government would scrap the Scottish parliament

Stephen Dorrell yesterday threw away the politicians' election rule-book. By even implying that a future Tory government might repeal legislation setting up a Scottish Parliament, he has set a dangerous precedent for his party.

First, he may have given himself a lifelong reputation for Anglo-centric arrogance by threatening to overturn the wishes of the Scottish people as expressed in a future referendum. Second, he sacrificed one of the main advantages of incumbency by being drawn into discussion of how the Tories would behave in the supposedly unmentionable event of a Labour victory.

But third, and potentially most nerve-racking of all, he exposed his colleagues to an almost limitless series of supplementary questions between now and polling day: what else are they planning to unstitch when they return after a putative Labour term in office? Scrap the minimum wage? Remove the European Convention of Human Rights from British law? Hand back the windfall tax? Restore hereditary peers to the House of Lords?

Given that Mr Dorrell has strayed, by way of an interview in *The Scotsman*, into this perilous territory, and given that this ferociously ambitious politician is not in fact an idiot, it's worth asking why he did it. Be suspicious of the term "gaffe". It is part of the small change of party politics. But it frequently describes something more revealing, and certainly more interesting, than mere error. Gaffes are sometimes more premeditated than they look; and even the most serious ones usually happen for a reason. The reason why Mr Dorrell took the risk he did, however unsuccessfully, lies in an inevitable inconsistency at the heart of the Government's approach to the issue of devolution.

For ministers have been relentlessly apocalyptic about the outcome of a Scottish Parliament. Almost in passing, John Major said at his press conference on 7 January that devolution would have "lit a fuse" to an independent Scotland and a direct conflict between the Edinburgh parliament and Westminster. But Mr Dorrell, now appointed Mr Major's witchfinder-general on the Constitution, has hinted at even darker consequences.

In a speech to the Centre for Policy Studies in November, Mr Dorrell preceded a long passage on devolution by referring portentously to the "bloodstained pages of history" and saying that "the last time the British resorted to the use of force to resolve their domestic political differences was nearly 250 years ago ... It is precisely their record on continuous evolutionary change which is now under threat from Labour's wide-ranging series of half-baked ideas for the constitution." In his *Scotsman* interview, Mr Dorrell's only qualification of this was to admit that devolution "need" not lead to civil unrest. But you can still script the scaremongering party political broadcast now.

Cue Edinburgh, circa 2001. The Labour Party in Scotland, paying the price for the Blair government's deep unpopularity, has been heavily defeated in mid-term elections to the Scottish parliament and a result the SNP is now the biggest single party. Reinforced by a small group of rebel Labour MPs, it has secured a vote in favour of independence in an Edinburgh Parliament which is now in direct collision with the Blair government's insistence that under the terms of the 1998 Scotland Act, Westminster remains sovereign and Edinburgh has no powers to declare UDI. There is clever footage of Belgrade-style demonstrations in the Royal Mile. We see English students at Scottish universities having their rooms ransacked by angry mobs. There have been hundreds of arrests and British troops have been called in to help the police to enforce order. Headlines in the normally sober *Scotsman* and *The Herald* are predicting civil war.

But there is a big problem for those painting the nightmare scenario, beside the obvious point that Scotland has not resorted to civil disorder during 18 years of having legislation imposed upon it by a government it never voted for. Which is that the Scottish Secretary Michael Forsyth last year admitted, with commendable honesty, that it was "fantasy" to imagine that a future Conservative government could turn the "omelette" of a tax-raising Scottish assembly "back into eggs". In other words, the Tories would not dream of repealing a Scottish parliament. And, of course, few, if any, Scottish Tories think otherwise.

Ian Lang, who is even closer than Mr Dorrell to Mr Major, took exactly the same view – in private – when he was Scottish Secretary. And that was before Labour committed itself to the referendum which now makes repeal politically impossible, at the very least without another referendum. And understandably so. One of the reasons that, back in the Seventies, Mr Forsyth and Mr Lang both strongly believed in a devolved assembly was precisely that it could be a vehicle for a Tory revival in Scotland – a country, after all, in which as recently as the Fifties a majority of MPs were Conservative. And that, as they both know very well, still applies.

So that was the problem (one that he himself had played his part in creating) that Dorrell was, perhaps subconsciously, trying to solve: if the Scottish parliament is so catastrophic, why are the Tories pledged to keep it in being?

And it's why, instead of warning that devolution would lead inevitably to a reduced number of Scottish MPs at Westminster, or reduced per capita funding, or whatever, he chose to hint at repeal. But in doing so he not only held out what on any sensible expectations must be a highly unlikely prospect, to put it politely; he cut directly across the skilful act that Mr Forsyth has been running in Scotland, inconsistency or not: devolution will be a disaster and, what's more, you'll be stuck with it. Indeed one danger for the Tories about Mr Dorrell's remarks to *The Scotsman* is that they may, if anything, make anti-devolutionists feel safer about voting Labour. After all, if it all goes wrong, that nice English Mr Dorrell will come back and scrap it.

Labour's devolution plans remain open to debate; the West Lothian question – namely, whether it would be justifiable to keep a disproportionately high number of Scottish MPs in Westminster voting on English-only legislation, when English MPs would no longer be voting on similar Scottish legislation – hasn't itself been answered by Tony Blair's sensible decision to promise a referendum. There will be continuing disagreement over whether the Scottish Parliament will cement the Union or bring independence closer – as, for their very different reasons, Alex Salmond, the SNP leader, and John Major both claim. But it doesn't help the Tory case to suggest what is patently implausible, that a future Tory government would scrap a Scottish parliament. The sensible course for Mr Major would be to stand Mr Dorrell down and leave the Labour bashing, at least as far as Home Rule is concerned, to Michael Forsyth.

Polished poetry and glittering prizes

by Ruth Padel

ICICLES ROUND A TREE IN DUMFRIESSHIRE

We're talking different registers of vulnerability here.
These icicles aren't going to last for ever
suspended in the ultraviolet rays of a Dumfries sun.

But here they hang, a frozen whirligig of lightning,
and the famous sculptor I think of in Nevada,
at work on the ochre moonsweep of a painted desert.

who scrambles the world with his tripod for strangeness
au naturel, got sunset to fill them.
Can't be comfortable.

a double helix of opalescent fire
stalactiting round your bark down string
on which a sculptor spired

and welded icicles, working all day
for that Mesopotamian magic
of last light before the dark,

suffusing
a suspended helter-skelter with horizontal rays,
turning it to a mist-carousel from the House of Diamond,

a spiral of Pepsodent, darkening to the blue shadowfrost
of cedars at the Great Gate of Kiev.
Why it makes me think of opening the door to you

I can't imagine.
No one could be less of an icicle.
But there it is – having put me down in felt-tip

in the mystical appointment book,
you shoot that quick inquiry-glance,
head tilted, when I open up,

like coming in's another country,
a country you want but have to get used to,
hot from your *bal masqué*,

making sure
that what you found before's still here:
a spiral of touch and go, lightning

licking a tree, casting itself as Aretha Franklin
singing "You make me feel
like a natural woman" in *basso profondo*

and firing the bark with its otherworld ice
the way you fire, lifting me off my own floor,
spliced round your trunk as that tree gyres

up at an angle inside the lightning,
roots in the orange and silver of Dumfries.
Now I'm the lightning now you, you are,

when you pour yourself round me
entirely. No who's doing what and to who,
just a tangle of spiral and tree.

You might wonder
about sculptors who come all this way
for a thing that won't last.

You know how it is: you fever a day, a whole life.
Then the light's passed, you walk away
to the Galloway Paradise Hotel.

Pine-logs, cutlery, champagne – OK,
but the important thing was making it.
Hours, and you don't know how it'll be.

Then something like light arrives last moment,
at speed reckoned only by horizons:
completing, surprising with its three hundred thousand

kilometres per second.
Still, even lightning has its moments of panic.
You don't get icicles catching the midwinter sun

in a perfect double helix in Dumfriesshire every day.
And can they be good
for each other, lightning and tree?

It'd make anyone, wouldn't it, afraid?
That rowan'd like to sleep and wake up in your arms
but's scared of getting burnt.

And the lightning might ask, touching wood,
"What do you want of me
now we're in the same atomic chain?"

What can the tree say? "Being the centre of all
that you are to yourself, that'd be OK
Being my own body's fine

but it needs yours to stay that way."
No one could live for ever in a suspended
gleam-on-the-edge, as if sky might tear any minute.

Or not for ever for long. Those icicles
won't be surprise any more. The string blew away.
Glamour left that hill in Dumfries.

The sculptor went off with his black equipment.
Adzes, twine, leather gloves. What's left is a photo
of a completely solitary sight

in a book anyone can open. And whether your
touch at the door gets forgotten
or turned into other sights, light, form,

I hope you'll be truthful to me.
At least as truthful
as lightning, skinning a tree.

Photograph: from 'Wood' by Andy Goldsworthy (Viking, £40)

Poets are minor carnivores, preying on their own (and everybody else's) vulnerability. Vulnerability is poetry's stock-in-trade. Now a poem about it has won me first prize in the National Poetry Competition: an unvulnerable-looking £4,000, half of it tax-free. (Only half, because I entered myself. If my publisher had done it, it would be all tax-free).

Weird. It's not what poems usually do. You work away obsessively several days then tinker over weeks, alternately thinking "This is great", "What a mess". Then suddenly it doesn't want you any more. When a poem wins something you look at its words (I now know) with a new eye. They take up the same space on a microchip, but how much is each worth? I tried to work it out but got dizzy. If I had cut a word, would the ones left be worth more?

Poems don't get that sort of money. They get *a bit*, never commensurate with work done on them: £25 plus a poetry magazine; £100 from a national newspaper. Four thousand pounds is incommensurate the other way.

I nearly didn't send this poem in. It took a month after seeing Andy Goldsworthy's sculpture in *The Independent on Sunday* to beat into any shape. That happened the day before the deadline. Then it appalled me. (*Talking Trees*? Whatever next? This is Tolkein going on Traherne.) "You are a mess," I told it. "You need six months' intensive care." I put it in a drawer. Two minutes later I fished it out and sent it off with the entry fee, regretting £5 and a first-class stamp.

The prize-giving at the Poetry Society in Covent Garden last week was a blur: wine flowing an hour after things were supposed to stop, a fairy-tale cheque in my jeans, plus three black boxes containing a Mont Blanc pen and its entourage of inkwell, etc. I shyly told Andrea from Mont Blanc that I usually write with a biro. (I didn't breathe computers.) Oh, she said with the charm of a duchess putting someone at ease with Bollinger by calling for stout. "We'll exchange it for a biro." But I'll stick with the pen.

"Avoid bearing down too hard when writing," says its instructions. I couldn't part with a pen that tells me that. It has a "special highly expressive nib" and describes what you've always wanted to know, "the ideal writing position". The mystical filling instructions include a drawing of an aeroplane. "Always fill your pen completely before travelling by air." Mont Blanc, you see, knows poets write flight-poems under the influence of free spirits.

My pen has a white marigold *at the tip*, is "designed to fit comfortably in the hand" (Andrea was afraid it might be too big for mine) and "provide a lifetime of writing pleasure". To men, apparently – the illustrations have a man writing to his mate, Bob, about strenuous chess problems. The nib, "adorned with intricate platinum inlay", has a "handmade tip of iridium alloy, rarer than gold and significantly harder than steel".

Wonderful. *Wonderful*. But I'm worried I might start writing like a man. "The poet Joachim Ringelnatz gave this pen *his ultimate tribute*". This phrase (echoes of *Funny Hill*) means a four-line address to his awe-inspiring tool.

My pen wants to be polished with a jeweller's cloth, an attention you could give words instead. I always got C for handwriting and have never had a mature relationship with any ink-filled object. I'm not their type. I suppose I'll learn. I've had it five days now but had too much work (on a laptop) to begin with proper awe. One day, I'll fill it.

A real pen, first prize out of 7,000 anonymous poems, money to fill your overdraft – this is what people dream of when they try an Arvon poetry course or a workshop listed in the pages of *Poetry London Newsletter*. (Catch the launch-reading for the next issue, on 27 February, in London's most spookily glamorous venue, the Old Operating Theatre.) "You'll have to write differently now," says Chris Meade, helping me look at my pen.

Chris runs the Poetry Society, its crimson basement, the Poetry Map on the Internet, the award-winning Poetry Café. Well Chris, thanks for *everything*. When I write now I promise I'll try out recommended positions, and not bear down too hard.

Easier to find servants than entrepreneurs

The first of a new series dispelling the economic nostrums on offer from the political parties

by Diane Coyle

It is the Government's favourite mantra, one of the most irritating and empty phrases ever coined by a speech writer. "Britain is the Enterprise Centre for Europe." Not only does it sound like an over-literal translation from a foreign language, a phrase from one of those glossy promotional brochures that overseas tourist boards like to hand out. It is also untrue.

Well, this conclusion does perhaps involve loading the phrase in question with more meaning than it can bear. Does it mean that Britain has more entrepreneurs than anywhere else in Europe? Or that entrepreneurs from around Europe like to take their holidays here?

This might be logical, but ministers' repetition of the phrase suggests that they want it to signify something more important. It indicates a belief that the British economy is more successful than most because of its entrepreneurship. Unfortunately there is not much evidence that this is so.

The rate at which small businesses start up looks impressive, but their failure rate is almost as high. Not many small companies grow up into big ones. Think of some of Britain's best-known and most successful entrepreneurs. Anita Roddick's Body Shop is one of them. More than 20 years old now, it is only the 302nd biggest company listed on the stock market.

Richard Branson runs Virgin, one of the biggest private companies in the UK, and one of the best-known internationally. There is no doubt that it is one of Britain's biggest entrepreneurial successes. But the airline Virgin Atlantic makes up most of the business and accounts for most of the profit. The more exciting and innovative Virgin businesses are tiny.

The recent huge international successes might not be Continental, but they are not British either. The giants of enterprise, such as America's Microsoft and Netscape, or Genentech and Amgen, completely outshine the small British technology firms.

Research by Warwick University's Centre for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises shows that in a six-year period the number of new businesses that survived amounted to only 1 per cent of the total number of all companies. This puts Britain behind Austria, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Switzerland as an enterprise centre.

That leaves, as the most solid footing for the Government's claim, the notion that overseas investors like to build their factories in this country rather than on the Continent. Inward investment in the UK has indeed been running at record levels. One catch, however: we have to gloss over the fact that outward investment by British companies has also reached a record level, with the UK investing twice as much abroad as abroad is investing here.

The UK's success in attracting foreign investors also relies on the lure of labour that is cheap for its level of productivity and skill. Others can play the same game, with Ireland and Spain inside the EU and the Czech Republic and Poland on Germany's eastern border offering stiff competition on the same territory.

Besides, to focus on the activities of foreign manufacturers gives an entirely misleading impression of the force driving the British economy. Britain is Europe's domestic service capital.

Yes, servants. When it comes to domestic staff, the UK has been creating jobs like nobody's business. Fallen City star Nicola Horlick is not alone in employing nannies and cleaners. According to official statistics, domestic service has been the fastest-growing sector of the economy since the trough of the recession five years ago, up by more than a third in terms of activity. This puts it ahead of various other rapidly expanding and possibly entrepreneurial industries such as air transport, computer services and telecommunications.

What's more, experts predict it will continue to be the fastest-growing area of employment. Warwick University's Institute for Employment Research predicted recently that the main areas of employment growth between now and 2001 will be professional occupations and administration on the one hand, and "personal and protective services" on the other.

This latter category is a mixed bag of jobs which includes domestic service, but also carers, private security guards and people serving fast food. It is the McJobs bit of the economy, with much of the work part-time or temporary, and almost all of it low-paid.

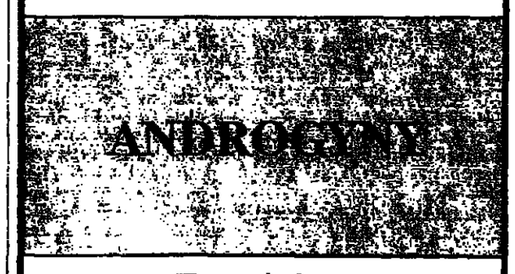
There are already more employees in this category, at 2.75 million out of a workforce of nearly 26 million, than in the professions, working in factories or working as salespeople. The report predicts that employment in personal services will grow by more than 4 per cent a year compared with declining employment in a majority of the other occupational categories.

According to Rob Wilson, editor of the Warwick University study, one explanation for the trend is the shrinking importance of manufacturing, which now makes up less than a quarter of the economy in this country. That means that whatever new jobs there are will be in the service industries. But within services, he says, "the way work is organised has tended to polarise between occupations requiring higher qualifications and unskilled jobs".

Britain's increasingly *Upstairs, Downstairs* economy could pose real social problems. As Dr Wilson points out, an increasing number of households are existing on very low pay. The UK has already seen since 1980 the biggest rise in earnings inequality in the industrialised world, making it the undisputed inequality centre for Europe.

MALE

FEMALE



Fashion Spring/Summer

1st March 1997

In association with

PAUL MITCHELL

Order a copy from your nearest newsagent.

THE INDEPENDENT
IT IS. ARE YOU?

business & city

Business news desk: tel 0171-293 2636 fax 0171-293 2098
BUSINESS & CITY EDITOR: JEREMY WARNER

National Express is preferred bidder for ScotRail franchise

Randeep Ramesh
Transport Correspondent

National Express, the coach and rail group, was announced yesterday as the preferred bidder for ScotRail, which runs trains north of the border.

The decision marks the end of the franchising process after a spurt of activity in January saw four franchises sold off in one day. Civil servants admit that the impending election has forced the pace of the sell-off.

The only remaining franchise in public hands is Regional Railways Central, which runs services from Wales to East Anglia. Managers from First Bus and National Express were meeting last night to present their final bids. A decision is imminent.

Scotrail's service will be heavily regulated by the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority, which is expected to rubber-stamp the decision a week on Friday.

National Express beat off rivals Stagecoach, the bus and rail group, Prism, the quoted train company, a management buy-out bid and a consortium including Go Ahead bus group.

Scotrail presented civil servants with many problems. Stagecoach was thought to stand little chance after officials announced it would be referred to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission if it won. Although the bus company has a 20 per cent share of the Scottish bus market, Brian Souter, the company's executive chairman, said his company would not have bid if there had been insurmountable problems.

The Scottish rail service generates more than £110m in ticket sales, but also requires a substantial subsidy of more than £240m – mostly to keep its "socially necessary" routes going.

ScotRail could have proved politically difficult to sell as councillors were initially opposed to the sale. However, Patrick Hetherington, the Opraf official handling the sale, managed to talk round most of the sale's opponents.

Labour-controlled Strathclyde PTA was also instructed by party officials not to delay the letting of the franchise. The party leadership was concerned that having a single train operating company in the public sector could become a political embarrassment after a Labour victory.

National Express has already successfully attracted passengers on to its Midland Mainline services carrying passengers from London to Leeds with innovative new fares and is now one of the largest groups controlling Britain's railways.

With ScotRail, which is the company's fourth franchise, the company's rail team will have met senior managers' target of a passenger revenue stream of £300m.

The group has ambitious plans for Scotrail, including new rolling stock and a refurbishment programme. The company is also considering building a new station at South Dalgetty in Fife and looking at plans for an airport link from Glasgow airport to the city centre.

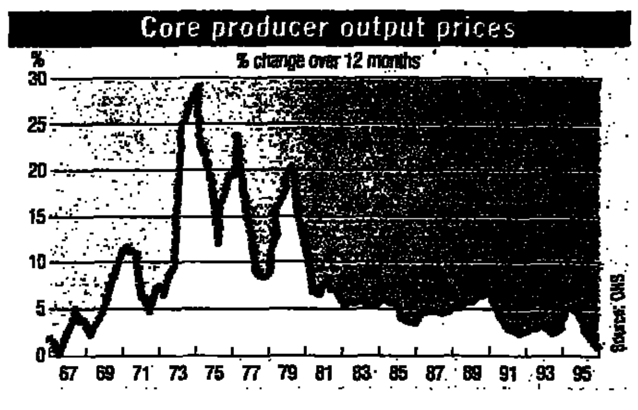
ScotRail will prove a difficult railway to run. Almost half its revenue comes from the Strathclyde area, where ticket prices are largely controlled by the passenger transport authority.

However, a high frequency service between Edinburgh and Glasgow could attract passengers from the congested motorway that links the two cities.

The leisure market, analysts predict, will be another profit centre. ScotRail runs the Fort William sleeper service and many of the highland routes.

Bank increases pressure on Clarke with renewed demand to raise rate

Diane Coyle
Economics Editor



The Bank of England is poised to raise the stakes in its clash with Kenneth Clarke with a renewed demand, in its Inflation Report tomorrow, for interest rates to rise. But the Chancellor is now widely expected to put politics first and avoid increasing borrowing and mortgage costs before the election.

Treasury officials admit privately that the Chancellor has not paid any attention to their internal advice for some weeks. "We don't know ourselves what he's going to say when he goes into the monthly meetings," said one.

Some Treasury officials, like the Bank of England, believe that the strength of the economy means base rates ought to rise to keep inflation on course for its target in the longer term.

One Treasury adviser, "wise person" Tim Congdon of Lombard Street Research, went further yesterday. In a report to clients he wrote: "British monetary policy is deviant and irresponsible, just as it has been on so many occasions in the past. It will lead over the medium term to higher inflation."

However, recent weakness in some of the monthly economic statistics has given Mr Clarke plenty of ammunition. The Chancellor could not conceal his delight at figures yesterday showing that inflation at the factory gate had fallen to its lowest for a generation.

"As I was driving to work this morning the producer price data were released, which were staggeringly low," the Chancellor said. In a speech yesterday he said economic prospects were the best in living memory.

Mr Clarke said the recovery had reached all regions, which meant it could be sustained for longer. "It means the economy can sustain higher levels of activity without running into inflationary buffers," he said.

There was additional support yesterday for his decision not to increase interest rates after last week's monetary meeting from a survey of high street retailers. This showed that retail sales growth picked up last month after a weak December but remained below last summer's rapid pace.

The British Retail Consortium said the strong pound meant tourists visiting London were doing less shopping. Food and drink sales were weak but the sales performance in other areas was good. Andrew Higginson, chairman of the BRC's economic affairs committee, said: "The latest figures point to a healthy picture for the economy as a whole. The value of retail sales has now stabilised."

Separately, official figures yesterday showed that the increase in "core" prices charged by manufacturers was 0.6 per cent in the year to January, the lowest rate of inflation at the factory gate since 1967. Output prices rose 0.3 per cent during the month before adjusting for normal seasonal variations – a very subdued increase at the time of year when manufacturers usually push through increases in their list prices.

A decline of 0.6 per cent in the price of raw materials in January, in large part due to the strength of the pound, helped explain the extremely good output price inflation figures. This took them to a level 6.2 per cent lower than a year earlier.

Analysts in the City said the latest economic news had vindicated Mr Clarke in the eyes of the financial markets.

"These figures were truly excellent from the Chancellor's perspective, said David Owen, an economist at Kleinwort Benson. "The exchange rate is clearly having a bearing on the economy."

Michael Dicks, UK economist at investment bank Lehman Brothers, said: "The Bank of England will have to make out the case for ignoring the rise in sterling since its last Inflation Report. It will not be as persuasive this time around."

Although some City experts agree with the Bank – and Treasury – view that base rates should go up now for the sake of the longer-term inflation target, most expect to see very favourable inflation figures for the next few months. "Short-term there is no reason to worry about inflation," said Kevin Darlington at Hoare Govett.

G7 view of exchange rates boosts dollar

The dollar gained ground after an early dip yesterday as financial markets absorbed the meaning of the weekend's communiqué on exchange rates from the Group of Seven (G7) industrial countries, *writes Diane Coyle*.

An upbeat annual report on the economy from the White House's Council of Economic Advisers confirmed the market sentiment that the underlying state of the US economy warrants a strong dollar.

The G7 statement said "major misalignments" in exchange rates the ministers had decided to tackle in April 1995 had been corrected. This was seen as a signal that they would be unhappy if the dollar strengthened very much further against the yen and mark, but equally were not about to intervene in the foreign exchange markets.

The view that the dollar's recent appreciation reflects economic fundamentals was boosted by yesterday's Economic Report of the President, which saw no sign of recession on the horizon. "There is no foreseeable reason why this expansion can not continue," it said.

The tone of the report, issued each February, was extremely optimistic. "The ability of the economy to sustain low unemployment and low inflation is the best it has been in years," it said, claiming that the rate of unemployment below which wages and prices would start to pick up had fallen and could decline further.

US unemployment has been below 6 per cent, the rate which economists used to think marked the start of the inflationary danger zone, for more than two years. The Council of Economic Advisers is in good company in its view that the so-called "natural" or "non-accelerating inflation" rate of unemployment has fallen.

The Council concluded that the economy's potential growth rate is higher than the 2.3 per cent average predicted for the next five years. "The administration does not think that 2.3 per cent real growth in the long term is the best the US can do. The outcome could be even better."

Andrew Regan: Thought to be keen to buy some of the Co-Op's non-food interests

Lanica suspended amid muddle over Co-Op deal

Nigel Cope

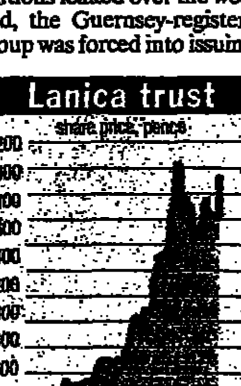
The strange tale of Lanica Trust, the tiny investment vehicle, took a fresh twist yesterday when dealings in the company's shares were suspended ahead of a planned approach to the Co-Operative movement about buying some of its non-food operations.

The suspension followed volatile early trading in Lanica shares which saw the stock soar a further 313p before dealings were halted at 1,950p. The surge was the latest in a series of wild movements in the shares which were trading at just 116p last September when 31-year-old entrepreneur Andrew Regan bought a controlling stake.

The Stock Exchange said it will be seeking further discussions with Lanica but had not launched a full scale inquiry.

In a bizarre sequence of events the shares were suspended before Lanica had held a single conversation with the Co-Op about a possible £500m deal and before the Co-Op was even aware of the interest.

But after news of Lanica's intentions leaked over the weekend, the Guernsey-registered group was forced into issuing a statement to the Stock Exchange yesterday. It said it had sent letters to the chief executives of both the Co-Operative Retail Society and its larger sister, the Co-Operative Wholesale Society saying it wished "to discuss the possible purchase of the certain non-food business of the societies".



Lanica's advisers said its approach had received a "very courteous response".

This view was at variance with a tersely worded statement from the Co-Op which rejected Lanica's overtures outright. It said: "The CWS has today written to its members giving them an assurance that the CWS has not been in discussion with Mr Regan, does not have the details of what his aspirations are and has no plans to dispose of CWS businesses or assets to him or his investment company."

The Co-Op said it had received no contact from Mr Regan before yesterday's approach, not even a telephone call. "The first it [the CWS] learnt of his impending approach was via a leak to a newspaper," it said.

Mr Regan, the son of Spring Ram chief executive Roger Regan, was preparing for a holiday in Barbados yesterday and was unavailable for comment. However, it is thought that he is keen to prepare a £500m deal that could see Lanica buy some of the Co-Op's non-food interests.

Comment, page 21

Safeway raises card war stakes

Peter Rodgers
Financial Editor

Supermarket competition in financial services was stepped up yesterday when Safeway launched a new interest-paying plastic card account in partnership with Abbey National.

The announcement came as Sainsbury's confirmed that it had received authorisation from the Bank of England to operate its planned joint venture with Bank of Scotland. Sainsbury's Bank, which will be launched before the end of March, will be 55 per cent owned by the supermarket group.

Safeway has stuck closer to the concept used by Tesco with its Club card, by putting its brand name on a card operated by an existing bank, rather than setting up its own bank.

Safeway said it hoped its ABC bonus account card would attract new customers as well as buy the loyalty of existing ones.

Ian Mumby, director of business development at Britain's third largest supermarket group, denied that Safeway was following a trend to move into financial services.

"I think we're doing something quite different from what our competitors are doing. So I would say we're not following, we're leading," he said.

The Safeway account offers 5 per cent pre-tax interest on balances of up to £600. Customers will be able to use the card at Safeway and any of 70,000 stores that accept Visa's Electron on-line debit card.

Cardholders will also collect points when shopping at Safeway, with extra points furing the first 12 weeks the account is open.

The cards can be used to withdraw cash from Abbey National's machines and 20,000 others, and customers will have access to a 24-hour telephone banking service.

Safeway said a range of other financial services would follow, which could include a current account with an overdraft and a credit card.

Safeway is working with Abbey towards providing banking within its stores, and other financial services such as personal loans and household insurance.

American and BA plan co-operation strategies

Michael Harrison

British Airways is examining ways to begin co-operating early with American Airlines even though regulatory hurdles in the US and Europe are likely to hold up the formal launch of their transatlantic alliance until late this year.

The news came as BA celebrated a decade in the private sector with record third-quarter profits and a special offer of 200 return tickets on Concorde for just £10.

Among the options being considered by BA and American are to begin sharing facilities at Heathrow and American's US hubs and joint marketing initiatives. BA executives said there were a number of areas in which they could collaborate in advance of the alliance being given anti-trust immunity by the US authorities.

They also expressed confidence that any link-up between American and the Spanish flag-carrier Iberia would not jeopardise the alliance. "Iberia would be a pretty odd bedfellow for us and doesn't have the right image but we do not think American would do anything that would create difficulties for our alliance," one BA executive said.

BA's code-share agreement with USAir expires at the end of March but BA and American are unlikely to get the go-ahead to merge their transatlantic services until the autumn. The link-up is being examined by both the European Commission and the US Justice Department and Department of Transportation. The European Competition Commissioner, Karel van Miert, has warned he may take Britain to the European Court unless tougher condition are imposed on the deal.

Mr Van Miert is also contesting BA's right to sell off runway slots as the price for getting regulatory approval, as this would amount to a backdoor form of state aid for airlines.

The loss of the USAir link-up will deprive BA of an estimated $100m in extra profits.

But as from this week BA is free to sell its 24.6 per cent holding in the carrier to other investors in a move which should allow it to at least recoup its original £250m investment. BA wrote down the value of the shareholding to £125m in 1995.

USAir has until the end of this week to repurchase the stake itself. Assuming that it decides not to, BA will begin negotiations with its advisers to dispose of the shareholding, probably through a placing in New York. The sale may not be completed in the current financial year.

Meanwhile, the BA chairman Sir Colin Marshall said he expected the economic growth that had fuelled record airline profits in 1996 to continue this year. BA, he added, remained on track to achieve £1bn of cost savings by the end of the decade through its business efficiency programme.

He was speaking as BA reported a 9 per cent advance in pre-tax profits to £113m for the three months to the end of December. The improvement came despite a 34 per cent rise in fuel costs which increased BA's fuel bill by £56m and reduced operating profits to £131m.

The Concorde offer will cost BA £1m in lost ticket revenue. The £10 return represents a saving of £5,400 on the current round fare. The tickets go on sale from 10pm tonight to the first callers to ring a special number: 0345 222111.

Investment column, page 22

American faces pilots' walk-out

David Usborne
New York

Last-ditch talks began yesterday to try to avert a potentially crippling pilots' strike at American Airlines. A walk-out would ground American, the largest domestic carrier in the US, and bring misery to travellers.

American, which is seeking regulatory approval of its proposed partnership across the Atlantic with British Airways, has warned that a walk-out would cost it in the region of $1bn (£610m) a month, which would wipe out recent profits.

Unless a settlement is achieved at so-called "super-mediation" talks in Washington DC under federal government auspices, the pilots' union, the Allied Pilots' Association, has vowed to declare a strike at midnight this Friday. Union officials have put the likelihood of a strike at about 50-50.

A strike could have a damaging ripple effect throughout the US economy. American accounts for about 20 per cent of US passenger travel and has a large share of freight and mail traffic. Most concerned are cities that are American hubs, like Miami, Chicago and its home base, Dallas-Fort Worth.

It would also cast a chill over both the Caribbean and Latin America, two regions where American is the pre-eminent US carrier.

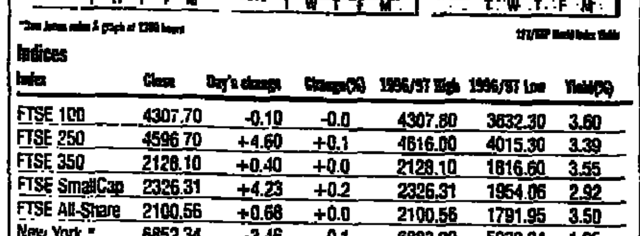
In preparation for the worst, American has already prepared redundancy notices for 90,000 employees who would be placed on emergency unpaid leave. Also grounded would be American Eagle, the carriers commuter subsidiary.

The company, which is headed by the irascible Robert Crandall, has also drawn $1bn from an existing credit line and borrowed an additional $1bn – with its entire fleet as collateral – to provide it with a cash cushion to ride through a strike.

At issue is the pilots' demand for an 11.5 per cent pay rise over the four-year life of a new contract. American, which reported record profits in 1996, is offering 5 per cent. "We are faced with two disastrous alternatives – unacceptably high costs or cessation of operations," Mr Crandall wrote in a memo to employees.

For travellers, it is a nightmare scenario. Friday also marks the start of a public holiday, the "President's Day" weekend, and the start of half-term for many schools. A strike could leave thousands of travellers either unable to travel or stranded away from home.

STOCK MARKETS

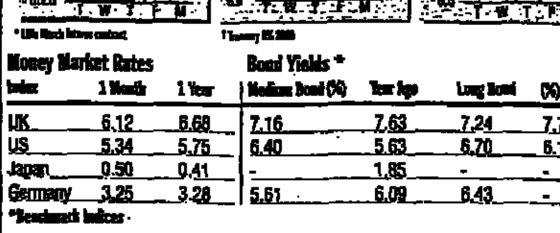


Indices

Index	Close	Day's change	Change(%)	1996/97 High	1996/97 Low	Yield(%)
FTSE 100	4307.70	-0.10	-0.0	4307.80	3632.30	3.60
FTSE 250	4596.70	+4.60	+0.1	4616.00	4015.30	3.39
FTSE 350	2128.10	+0.40	+0.0	2128.10	1816.60	3.55
FTSE SmallCap	2326.31	+4.23	+0.2	2326.31	1954.06	2.92
FTSE All-Share	2100.56	+0.68	+0.0	2100.56	1791.95	3.50
New York *	6852.34	-3.46	-0.1	6883.90	5032.94	1.95
Tokyo	18181.17	+314.13	+1.8	22666.80	17303.65	0.90†
Hong Kong	13643.54	-16.96	-0.1	13868.24	10204.87	3.09†
Frankfurt	3184.36	+46.35	+1.5	3184.36	2253.36	1.50†

Source: FT Information

INTEREST RATES



Money Market Rates / **Bond Yields ***

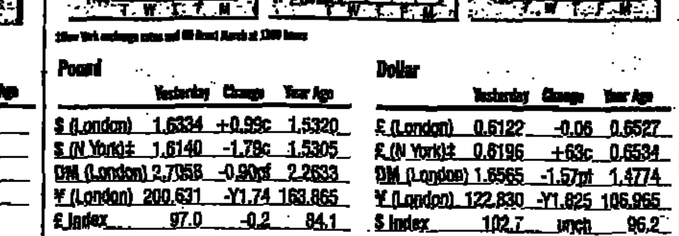
Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Bond (%)	Year Ago	Long Bond	(%) Year Ago
UK	6.12	6.68	7.16	7.63	7.24	7.78
US	5.34	5.75	6.40	5.63	6.70	6.12
Japan	0.50	0.41	-	1.85	-	-
Germany	3.25	3.28	5.61	6.09	6.43	-

*Benchmark indices

MAIN PRICE CHANGES

Rises	Price (p)	Change (p)	Change%	Falls	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
Scot Television	596.5	30	5.3	Brake Bros	445	30	6.3
Electra Inv Trust	486.5	20.5	4.4	Bunzl	200	7.5	3.6
NFC	164	6.5	4.1	T & N	157.5	5	3.1

CURRENCIES



Pound

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
$ (London)	1.6334	+0.99c	1.5320
$ (N York)‡	1.6140	-1.79c	1.5305
DM (London)	2.7058	-0.90pf	2.2633
¥ (London)	200.631	-Y1.74	163.865
£ Index	97.0	-0.2	84.1

Dollar

	Yesterday	Change	Year Ago
£ (London)	0.6122	-0.06	0.6527
£ (N York)‡	0.6196	+63c	0.6534
DM (London)	1.6565	-1.57pf	1.4774
¥ (London)	122.830	-Y1.825	106.965
$ Index	102.7	unch	96.2

OTHER INDICATORS

	Yesterday	Day's chg	Year Ago
Oil Brent $	20.70	-0.97	16.78
Gold $	341.20	+0.85	405.50
Gold £	208.88	-0.76	264.69

Index	Latest	Yr Ago	Next Figs
RPI	154.4+2.5pc	150.6	13 Feb
GDP	108.9+2.3pc	105.7	27 Jan
Base Rates	- 6.00pc	6.75	--

مكبرا من الاصل

Labour shows the way forward for the Bank

COMMENT

'Paradoxical as it seems, giving the Bank its independence is the best way to make monetary policy less arbitrary. Its independence will be required eventually in any case if Britain decides to join the single currency'

Are interest rates safe in his hands? Kenneth Clarke says they are. He can point to the mix of low inflation and steady rather than rapid growth revealed by recent monthly economic statistics. Perhaps he will turn out to be right. But the point is that the reins of monetary policy should not rest in his hands alone. The arrangements rushed in after the failure of Britain's ERM policy in 1992 were supposed to create an institutional framework that would restore the credibility of policy and make the judgements less arbitrary. They have failed on both counts.

The arbitrariness is displayed by Mr Clarke's cheerful dismissal of advice from both the Bank of England and his own officials. In fact, he has disagreed with the Bank for most of the past two years. For part of 1995 and again since last May, the Bank has been much more hawkish – and with reason if you remember that inflation has only been below its 2.5 per cent target for two months during that entire period. Now many Treasury economists have come to share the Bank's diagnosis, and Mr Clarke turns out to be ignoring them too.

As for credibility, its absence is clear in the verdict of the financial markets. The British Government has to pay a lot more to borrow money than any other European government apart from that of Greece. Nor have inflationary expectations in Britain changed very much. There is a simple way of measuring this – by comparing the yield on index-linked and conventional gilts – and it has fallen only slightly, with UK inflation expected to be above 4 per cent on a 5-10 year horizon.

A new Labour government would set the Bank of England on the road to independence by introducing a Monetary Policy Committee consisting of the Governor, Deputy Governor and six directors reporting to a more broadly-based Court of the Bank of England. If it worked well, the Bank would earn its independence.

Paradoxical as it seems, giving the Bank its independence is the best way to make monetary policy less arbitrary. Its independence will be required eventually in any case if Britain decides to join the single currency. But whether this happens or not, Labour's proposals would, shorn of their vagueness, be a huge improvement over the present arrangements. These have turned out not to check at all the untrammelled decisions of a Chancellor bowing to political pressures.

A broader – but sensible – range of appointments to the Bank's Court; a policy committee which could deliberate and report in secret, and therefore with honesty, but its minutes published with a delay; and ultimately an independent Bank – it is hard to see the flaw in what Labour is proposing.

If there is one, it would surely lie in the Chancellor's ability to pick and mix the advice of the monetary committee. If the committee were divided, for instance, he could chose the option that most suited him politically. The beauty of the present system is that the Governor's advice is unambiguous. That said, however, these reforms would be a clear advance.

G7 cannot hold back the tide

There was something Canute-like about the cheery statements from the finance ministers who emerged from the G7 meeting this weekend. That's great, they cried to the foreign exchange markets, but don't move any further. Like the Danish king thanking the sea for washing his toes, but warning it not to tickle his ankles, they didn't sound particularly convincing.

The G7 finance ministers were right back in April 1995, when they collectively decided to take the steam out of the yen and the mark. The slow steady rise of the dollar since then in any case reflects the healthier US economy compared to its European and Japanese counterparts. But the idea that the trend will stop here simply isn't plausible.

When credible authorities announce that the economic fundamentals demand a particular (if broadly defined) correction in exchange rates, and convincingly convey their determination to get it by intervening in the markets, then traders take note. Why waste your time betting on a rising dollar if you know the Federal Reserve and the Bank of Japan have the power and the confidence to prevent it happening?

But that is not what is going on here. For a start, the G7 ministers made no mention of co-ordinated intervention this weekend.

More important, even if the finance ministers and central bankers had discussed building a sea wall, the chances are the markets wouldn't have taken them seriously for long. The US economy is growing well, and its fiscal position is strong. Across the Pacific on the other hand, the Japanese are slowly and painfully adjusting their economy to cope with the competitive pressures of the next century. While they are struggling, the yen will remain fragile.

This may be the time for the G7 to start thinking seriously about "target trading zones" for their currencies. Sounds a bit like a global version of the ill fated ERM, doesn't it? But actually that is the implication of what finance ministers said this weekend. They want exchange rates broadly where they are for the time being. But are they prepared to do what the markets require in terms of intervention and policy to keep them there?

This man is not the next Lord Hanson

Is this a ramp, or what? It is hard to see how the astonishing rise over the last six months in the Lanica share price can be justified, other than on a wing and a prayer. Even if Andrew Regan does turn out to be the high achieving entrepreneur true believers think he is, even if he does manage to pull off a deal with the Co-op and follow it in swift order with others, and even if he does transform those businesses into something they are not at the moment, can he really expect to vindicate the £97m of hope presently invested in the company's stock market value.

If you take the view that Mr Regan is the next Lord Hanson, then possibly. But actually, there's not much reason, so far, to think he is. For a start, he's only 31 years old, and as befits someone of that age, his record of deal making is unspectacular. Right now there's lots of noise and speculation but not much action.

First there was the bid that never was for the mail order firm Freemans. Now this Co-op business. Billed as the deal of the month in a leading Sunday newspaper, the whole thing turned rapidly to farce yesterday. As it happened the Co-op hadn't even been approached. Letters were rapidly drafted and dispatched, but then ... well actually we don't want to sell anyway, so get lost.

Mr Regan's supporters say he's a serious guy, he's got some good ideas and backers, and one day soon he'll pull off something big. So far, there's scant evidence of it, however. This is one of those cases of the stock market's propensity to back the man, rather than the company and its business. Steer well clear, for unless you know exactly what you are doing, you'll get your fingers badly burnt.

Electricity firms 'may have to delay competition'

Chris Godsmark
Business Correspondent

The electricity industry regulator may have to consider delaying the launch of domestic competition, planned to start in April 1998, rather than developing special contingency plans, according to a leaked report commissioned by his department, Offer.

The document, submitted last month by PA Consulting Group, Offer's programme manager for competition, also warns that the two preferred contingency arrangements may be so time-consuming and complicated that they may fail to work on time.

The latest disclosure about domestic competition follows comments last week by Professor Stephen Littlechild, the regulator, arguing that the complex process of transferring customers to alternative suppliers might have to be done manually if newly developed computer programs break down. Offer's plan envisages a rolling programme extending competition to 20 million homes between April and September next year.

PA Consulting was asked by Offer to come up with contingency plans after growing doubts about whether the industry would meet this timetable. Its report, which has been seen by *The Independent*, warns: "Delaying the launch of the competitive electricity supply market is a possible option for all scenarios. Before contingencies are invoked, the relative benefits of contingency versus delaying the launch

could be considered." It goes on to outline various possible contingency arrangements which would give customers the ability to move supplier even though the systems to manage the process had not been fully developed.

The report says Offer will have to decide which plan to adopt by May, with a final decision on whether to implement the temporary arrangements due in September.

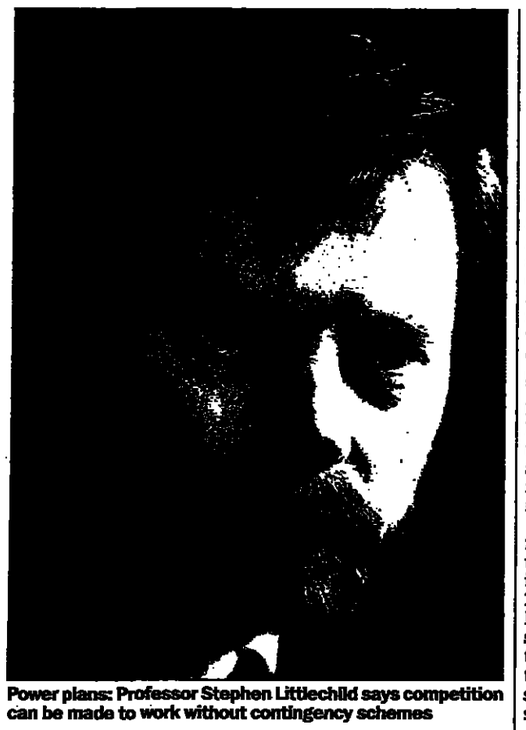
The first option involves new suppliers signing temporary bilateral agreements with the regional electricity companies, a solution apparently favoured by Professor Littlechild. Existing bills would be sent out by the RECs in the usual way, except that they would go to the new supply companies rather than direct to households. However the PA report says these new contracts would have to be kept simple and concludes: "The major concern is that resolving [this] will take too long and the solution will become over complex."

The alternative contingency plan envisages developing temporary trading arrangements between suppliers and the Electricity Pool, the body which manages the wholesale power market. The PA document also doubts whether this would work. "This option may require changes to the Pool commercial arrangements, including the Operational Framework. Obtaining Pool members' agreement to such changes may prove extremely time consuming, if not impossible, to achieve."

Professor Littlechild insisted last week that competition could be made to work on time without the need for such fallback arrangements. However management consultants advising the RECs have suggested that at least a third of the 14 companies involved – 12 in England and Wales plus two in Scotland – are unlikely to have their computer systems ready in time. The fear inside the industry is that the contingency plans may be just as difficult to sort out.

The warnings of PA Consulting have been echoed by Andrew Claxton, chief executive of the Pool, which is spending £50m preparing for competition. He told a recent industry conference that the contingency plans could be so unattractive that they would put off new suppliers from entering the market. Outlining the severe shortage of trained consultants to manage the computer problems, he said developing temporary fallback plans "implies a diversion of resources that can further compound the initial scarcity."

A spokeswoman for Offer declined to comment on the report yesterday. She said PA was likely to produce a final version of the document in the next few weeks. This might be made public.



Power plans: Professor Stephen Littlechild says competition can be made to work without contingency schemes

VDC shares slump on profits warning

Magnus Grimond

Shares in VDC, floated on the Alternative Investment Market at 400p in September 1995, crashed 110p to 165p yesterday after the medical products distributor warned that results would be "significantly below current expectations". The group, formerly known as the Veterinary Drug Company, blamed the problems on Procare Health, a dental supplies distribution business, acquired for £6.1m last April from Enviromed, the biotechnology group riven lately by boardroom strife.

Robert Rabone, VDC's finance director, said they had uncovered several deficiencies in the pricing systems for the 27,000 stock lines carried by Procare. He described it as "a systems-based problem rather than a fraud or anything like that". The faulty systems had resulted in margins being overstated, reducing profits by some £240,000 compared with what they had previously thought.

Mr Rabone said Procare had also been running with volumes "at least 20 per cent" below the budgeted level in a competitive market. Since acquisition, it had been recovering from the significant fall-off in turnover it suffered at the hands of Enviromed. From the nadir reached in September 1995, the business had recovered to levels in December and January to above those of the comparable periods.

"But under the ownership of Enviromed, the management had put such strictures on the business that it had suffered badly, hence we bought it at a good price. Unfortunately, we are not now going to meet the market's expectations of growth in that business now."

Market forecasts for group profits in the current year to May were cut by £1m to around £1.7m yesterday, only slightly ahead of the previous year's figure of £1.65m. Mr Rabone said Procare had made profits of £35,000 in the first half and had been expected to make "several hundred thousand" more in the second. They were now expecting it to turn in a small loss.

Procare's market share of the dental supplies market, put at around 10 per cent when it was acquired, was now somewhere between 6 and 8 per cent, Mr Rabone said. As well as some loss of share to the operation's two or three bigger rivals, he said the accuracy of market information had been improved.

He said they would not be taking any legal or other action against the vendors of Procare, however Ernst & Young, the group's auditors, have been asked to extend their review of the interim financial statements. Management reporting systems have also been tightened up. VDC's interim results are expected to be released on 21 February.

How Dow Jones plummeted in January

The US financial information group is facing a revolt over spending on its Telerate, writes **David Usborne** in New York

More used to being a purveyor of the news rather than a subject of it, the Dow Jones company, publisher of the *Wall Street Journal*, is attracting shrill headlines about its flagging stock price and unrest among its shareholders.

Uncertainty about the future of the company, which also owns the Telerate global financial information service, has even led to media reports that it could be about to fall prey to one of its biggest rivals, Reuters of the UK.

The woes at Dow Jones centre on its share price which has long been stuck at around the $39 (£24m) mark, well below its peak achieved 10 years ago.

The disappointing share performance has led to widely publicised sniping from two members of the Bancroft family that founded and still controls the company, William Cox III and his cousin, Elisabeth Goth.

Last week saw the sudden resignation from the company payroll of Mr Cox, who had been in charge of Dow Jones' global stock indices. While Mr Cox gave no official reason for his decision, he indicated that it would liberate him to fight for a change of direction in management.

Most urgently at issue is the fate of Telerate, which has been falling behind the rival global services of Reuters and Bloomberg. Stock of Dow Jones took a beating in late January after the company announced that it would spend $650m trying to revive the sagging service. Many investors had been hoping instead for a decision to dump Telerate.

Fortune magazine, meanwhile, recently revealed that the prominent New York money manager Michael Price has amassed 5.4 per cent of Dow Jones stock. The magazine last week tried to capitalise on its scoop by placing an advertisement in the *Wall Street Journal*. Dow Jones refused to print it, however.

Mr Price has since spoken out about his disappointment with the decision to spend more money on Telerate and is expected to push for new additions to the Dow Jones board at its annual shareholders meeting in April. "Hopefully, there will be some smart people in there," he said.

There has been no confirmation, however, of Reuters or any other competitor exploring a hostile buyout. Members of the Bancroft family, Mr Cox included, have declared themselves unified in wishing to keep the company independent. "I would like to see Dow Jones independent, but the best way to do that is to good corporate governance," Mr Cox remarked.

Of his own decision to quit his post, Mr Cox commented: "I think that it's the right route. It's difficult to work at the company and try to get better shareholder value." He added: "Obviously Michael Price is there and others are there because it's an underpriced stock."

Taking the heat in the dispute is the current chairman of Dow Jones, Peter Kann. A former Pulitzer Prize recipient and famed Vietnam war reporter, Mr Kann may be under pressure in April to spin off Telerate and cut the company's losses in it. There is no expectation, however, that his own position is at risk.

High price hint for Centrica

British Gas brushed off recent pessimism about its share price performance yesterday when shares in its soon-to-be-demerged supply division, Centrica, began trading near the top end of analysts' expectations on the unofficial "grey market", writes Chris Godsmark.

Centrica shares ended at 70.5p, valuing the company at almost £3.2bn. Official trading begins next Monday, with the split from British Gas to be put to a shareholders' vote at an EGM tomorrow.

Yesterday's indicative price suggests the misery for 1.8 million small investors could be overdone. Previous estimates of Centrica's value had varied wildly, with some analysts putting the share price as low as 25p and others higher than 90p.

Simon Flowers, head of utilities at NatWest Securities, said: "The stock market has come to the conclusion that the assets are quite desirable and the liabilities are not as high as was previously thought."

Shares in BG, the pipeline business, closed on the grey market at 172.5p. British Gas shares were unchanged at 243.5p.

In Brief

- **A joint venture between Tarmac and Amec** has won a £100m contract to build a second runway at Manchester Airport. The civil engineers said the runway, which will be almost two miles long, should be operational from spring 2000 and employ around 500 workers during its construction. Manchester Airport, which is facing some vocal public opposition to the plan, forecasts that its expansion will generate around 50,000 jobs for the region over the next 10 years, including 15,000 at the airport.

- **Ionica, the company marketing a telephone service** to homes based on wireless technology, is planning to extend its network to 3.5 million homes in the Midlands. The company, which is partly owned by Yorkshire Electricity and Northern Electric, launched its service in East Anglia last year. It claims it can undercut BT's domestic charges by around 15 per cent. The first stage of the expansion will be in Nottingham. Ionica has a national licence and plans to cover three quarters of England and Wales by 2000.

- **Canal Plus, the French pay-TV group**, said it may eventually be interested in listing its Paris Saint-Germain soccer team on the London stock exchange but that it had no plans to do so in 1997.

- **British Telecommunications** is confident that "no significant competition problems will emerge" and that its proposed merger with MCI Communications Corp "will be cleared in the next few months". BT directors told an all-party Trade and Industry select committee of MPs that the merger of the two companies will permit their complimentary skills to be deployed to the benefit of customers in the UK, the US and other markets.

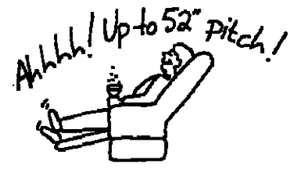
- **Lloyd's of London will be calling for a further £25.6m** from as many as 8,675 of the 34,000 names who accepted its Reconstruction and Renewal offer last summer. This will be payable in addition to the sums indicated in the settlements which the names agreed to. Some £2m relates to adverse exchange rate movements since R&R was accepted, which will affect some 6,000 names. Retention of dollar surpluses worth £18.6m in respect of the 1994 and 1995 underwriting losses will affect 2,500 names. The remaining £5m called upon will be paid by around 175 names, and relates to the under-realisation of assets pledged as funds at Lloyd's.

Are you sitting comfortably?

(You must be in Emirates' new Business Class.)

Comfortable? There's now up to 52" seat pitch on our Airbus aircraft, and our Boeing 777s boast one of the most advanced seats in the sky.
Pampered? There's a personal video, phone, fax and the finest champagne and cuisine. Impressed? We hope so.

Emirates
THE FINEST IN THE SKY



R 100 INTERNATIONAL AWARDS. 41 INTERNATIONAL DESTINATIONS. FOR DETAILS CALL EMIRATES OR YOUR LOCAL TRAVEL AGENT. http://www.ekgroup.com/

Resignation wipes one-third off Toad market value

Magnus Grimond

Toad, the loss-making car security group backed by Chris Evans, the biotech entrepreneur, saw nearly one-third of its stock market value wiped out yesterday following the surprise resignation of the chief executive, Charles Parker, after just over a month in the job.

The company blamed "irreconcilable differences" between Mr Parker, who joined from the Charter industrial giant at the beginning of January, and the rest of the board. But the group also warned that sales in December and January had been "substantially below budget" due to disappointing trading through dealers and its own network of installers.

Mr Parker, who is on a £170,000 contract at 12 months notice, is to be replaced as chief executive by Kevin Gray, who became a non-executive director following the takeover of his Secur-Fix company last April.

The shares, which recently moved from the Alternative Investment Market to a full listing, crashed 19.5p to 41.5p yesterday, wiping £3.3m off the group's former market capitalisation of £10.3m. The group has raised £10.6m in two placings at 90p and 80p a share over the past 14 months, the latest in January, but the shares have been sliding steadily since the start of the year, when they were trading at around 85p.

Mr Evans, who chairs the group and owns around 20 per cent of the shares, said there was "nothing substantive" to account for the departure of Mr Parker. There was "nothing massive. No major falling out. No bombshell," he said. He also dismissed any suggestion of Mr Parker uncovering a "black hole" at the group. "If there was, we would have been obliged to reveal it. It was just a whole number of little things", Mr Evans said.

The second-half loss for the group would be lower than for the comparable period of the previous year, but sales in January and February had been disappointing, he said. They were still on course for around £5m sales for the year and a loss in the region of £3.5m, roughly in line with previous market forecasts.

He suggested compensation for loss of office would not be large. Mr Parker had resigned and was therefore legally entitled to nothing. "There may be some kind of payment, but it will not be substantial."

Mr Parker had spent several months last year doing what Mr Evans described as "due diligence" before throwing in his lot with Toad. He had been credited with pushing through Charter's highly successful £445m takeover of the Swedish welding rods group Esab in 1994. But it had been clear almost from when he took the reins in January that he was not comfortable in the job, Mr Evans said. "The leap from a big company to a small one, that's a hell of a leap. Time and time again, people fail in making that leap."

There were said to have been "fundamental disagreements" between Mr Parker and the non-executive directors over the way the group should be taken forward. Mr Evans, whose fortune based on biotech groups such as Chiroscience was put at £60m last year, is one of three non-executives on the company's board, along with John Morris, a fellow biotech investor, and Derek Whittaker, a former chief executive of the old British Leyland car group.

Toad in a hole: Chris Evans (above) said there was 'no bombshell' behind Charles Parker's departure after only a month in charge

NFC boosted by prospect of Lynx sale

Patrick Tooher

Shares in NFC rose sharply yesterday after the transport and logistics group announced it was in talks to sell Lynx, its express parcels operation, to a management buyout team backed by venture capitalists at NatWest.

NFC's shares advanced 7.5p to 164p on the news, but remain adrift of the 200p reached in recent months.

In a statement NFC said it would be several weeks before a contract was signed because NatWest was currently undertaking due diligence. A further announcement would be made when the current negotiations were concluded. NFC continued. The deal is expected to net NFC between £30m-£35m.

Lynx, which can deliver parcels overnight in Britain and continental Europe, had a net asset value of around £25m and turnover of £94m in the year to September, when it returned to profitability. It has had a chequered past with losses peaking at over £12m in 1993.

Analysts welcomed the news of the planned disposal. "Lynx is in a fierce and competitive business and is barely making money but it is on the mend and should clear its net asset price," said Andrew Darke, transport analyst at brokers William de Broe. "Two years ago NFC could not give it away."

NFC, whose activities include Exel Logistics and Pickford transport group, has indicated for some time that Lynx was a non-core business, but management led by Gerry Murphy, who became chief executive in 1995, insisted it was in no rush to sell.

Link competes against the likes of UPS, Federal Express and Nightfreight in a highly fragmented UK market where margins are notoriously wafer-thin.

The decision to sell Lynx ends months of speculation about its future within NFC. It is also part of Mr Murphy's strategy to concentrate its UK logistics operations on larger and fewer contracts. Mr Murphy also plans to build revenues in North America and reorganise a series of national networks in Europe.

Mr Murphy and Sir Christopher Bland, the chairman, who also joined NFC two years ago, have presided over a wholesale clearout of directors as part of a £50m restructuring programme.

After slumping to a £39m profit in 1995, NFC recovered to make £105m on sales of £2.46bn in the year to September.

NFC is still left with a clutch of heavily loss-making businesses on the Continent after its ill-fated attempt to build a pan-European distribution system in the late-Eighties.

Sir Christopher recently ruled out selling the European businesses, saying divestment was not an option.

In Brief

• **Peptide Therapeutics' shares soared** by 41p to 370p on news of a link with SmithKline Beecham. The pharmaceuticals giant is paying £6m for a 2.8 per cent stake in Peptide and the right to develop and market allergy drugs based on Peptide's technologies. The deal follows last month's acquisition of a £3m stake in Peptide by Medeva in an agreement covering the joint development of vaccines.

• **Huntington International**, the pharmaceuticals company, reported a return to profit in 1996, making £9.35m before tax compared with a £29m loss in the previous 15 months. There is still no dividend, with the directors stating that "cash resources should be reinvested" to sustain growth. In the US, growth in orders from the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industry is "particularly pleasing".

• **Pillar Property has pre-sold** almost one-third of its Brommielaw development in Glasgow to British Telecom. Contracts have been exchanged for the development of a 180,000 square foot office building. Pillar's shares rose 11.5p to 221.5p.

• **A concert party, including Strand Nominees** and Capital Partners, sold its entire 50.75 per cent shareholding in Quiligotti at 20.5p a share. The shares in the building materials group were bought by several institutions and management at Quiligotti. David Scott, the company's chief executive, bought 1.5 million shares, taking his holding to 4.18 per cent. The shares rose 6.5p to 21.5p.

• **Unidare, the engineering company**, is paying £1.9m for Eland Electrical, the welding accessories wholesaler. In 1995, Eland made operating profits of £237,000 on sales of £4.9m.

• **Core Group, the pharmaceutical company**, plans to obtain a full stock market listing through a placing that will raise between £15m and £20m. The placing will value Core at between £50m and £80m. The company said the fund raising will enable it to extend development programmes and bring its first product to market. Core develops pharmaceutical products for controlled release of drug substances in the body. Its portfolio is focused on pain management and female healthcare.

• **Hadleigh's finance director**, Stephen Yapp, is leaving to take the same post at SGB Group, a subsidiary of John Mowlem, which is being considered for partial flotation. Mr Yapp will leave at the end of next month, but will remain available to Hadleigh on pre-agreed dates until the end of July to assist with the completion of the year-end report and accounts.

Company Results

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
British Airways (03)	2.02bn (1.89bn)	113m (104m)	9.2p (9.1p)	- (-)
Bryant Group (I)	257m (232m)	15.4m (10.1m)	3.7p (2.4p)	1.45p (1.45p)
Dalgety (I)	2.19bn (2.18bn)	43.0m (69.4m)	9.3p (17.7p)	8.5p (8.5p)
London Industrial (N)	12.6m (10.2m)	3.58m (3.04m)	17.9p (15.7p)	- (-)
Whittard of Chelsea (I)	11.6m (9.41m)	0.55m (0.37m)	2.19p (1.67p)	1p (-)

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (N) - Nine months (Q) - Third quarter

Queensborough selects Guthrie to build chain

Magnus Grimond

Michael Guthrie, who last October sold his Brightreasons restaurants group to Whitbread for £46m, has been appointed to the board of Queensborough Holdings with a brief to move the leisure group into "casual dining". Mr Guthrie, who made his first fortune floating the the Mecca bingo to holiday group, is said to be ready to mount a bid to buy back Brightreasons' Pizza Piazza chain from Whitbread.

Mr Guthrie yesterday refused to comment on speculation about this or that he was behind one of the bids for Granada's Welcome Break chain of motorway service stations, which the television to hotels group is being forced to sell following last year's £3.9bn takeover of Forte. He said he could only confirm that he intended to help Queensborough in building up a restaurant business. However, he emphasised: "One thing's for certain: I am not going into one-offs, I am going to build up a chain."

The stock market reacted well to the appointment, marking Queensborough's shares up 5p to 36p. Up to now the group, which is one of the stock market vehicles of biotech entrepreneur Kevin Leech, has been concentrating on building a caravan site and theme park empire, including Cheddar Gorge. But Stuart Sim, Queensborough's deputy chairman, said yesterday they were not ruling out an approach to Whitbread.

"The plan is the creation of new division within Queensborough, alongside its existing businesses, in that exciting area of leisure dining services, as it is called." They had "several options and we are considering these very carefully at this time", both acquisitions and green field sites, he said.

Queensborough wants Mr Guthrie to spearhead plans to make it a force in high street, rather than city centre, dining. That did not necessarily assume building an enormous chain, Mr Sim suggested. "If you look at people like Burger King, a very dominant player, they have 500 restaurants. Everybody assumes they have thousands of restaurants. If you come to the pricier end of the market, Pizza Express has a relatively small number of restaurants."

Mr Guthrie does not appear to be debarred from other business enterprises by yesterday's appointment. However, Mr Sim said: "He will not be doing anything in that sector which is competitive with Queensborough."

Queens Moat sells 25 hotels

The struggling Queens Moat Houses company yesterday sold 25 hotels for £91.5m to a group of managers backed by Hambro European Ventures. The company has now sold all but 51 of its UK hotel portfolio in an attempt to cut debts.

Wayne Sanderson, an analyst at Merrill Lynch, said the price achieved for the 19 three-star County and six four-star Moat House brand hotels "sounds reasonable". However, he added that QMH still had a long way to go, with around £247m of senior debt to repay by the end of the year 2000.

The 25 hotels sold yesterday have a total of 1,865 rooms, and made operating profits of £11.2m from £42.5m of sales in the financial year to 19 December.

QMH will use £65.5m of the sale proceeds to repay senior debt due this and next year; another £6m will be used to repay junior debt, some £17.5m will be set aside for capital improvements, and the remaining £2.5m will repay creditors.

Andrew Coppel, chief executive, said the sale represented an important step in the group's recovery. "It achieves almost the whole of the group's UK disposal programme in a single step and a significant reduction in the group's debt repayment burden."

Last September, QMH reported that it lost £3.1m in the six months to June, compared with a £700,000 profit a year previously. However, it said it had made satisfactory progress in the second half, helped by lower interest rates. Occupancy in UK managed hotels rose to 70 per cent from 67.8 per cent.

Occupancy levels and room rates in the Netherlands also increased, while performance in Germany fell.

Mr Coppel said prospects for further profits growth remained sound.

Dalgety dogged by Pedigree problems and BSE crisis

The Investment Column

EDITED BY MAGNUS GRIMOND

It is two years since Dalgety launched a £186m rights issue to pay for the near-£500m deal to buy Quakers' European pet food operations. The cash call was priced at 335p. Yesterday the shares were barely above that level, closing up 1.5p at 341p. It has clearly been a rough two years for chief executive Richard Clothier and the jury is still out on whether the business is turning the corner.

At the time of the Quaker deal, the strategy to sell consumer foods divisions such as Golden Wonder and Homepride to concentrate on pet food looked plausible. But a lot has gone wrong since then.

The BSE crisis has hit the group's animal feesuds division, the rival Mars-owned Pedigree Petfoods has been aggressive on pricing and the strength of sterling has affected overseas earnings. Integrating the Quaker pet foods business cost far more than originally anticipated.

The wounds were apparent in yesterday's half-year figures with pre-exceptional profits in the six months to 31 December down £4m to £43m. It was the agribusiness division which suffered most, with the BSE-inspired export ban causing excess capacity and increased costs, which were compounded by the strength of sterling

Though pet food profits held up, the dog food business has been dented by Pedigree's marketing muscle. Dalgety's Felix brand has held off a marketing challenge by Pedigree's Whiskas brand. In dog food it will be hoping that its Winalot re-launch with the slogan "Live a lot, wag a lot, Winalot," raises sales as well as smiles.

With Dalgety's shares a long way south of their mid-1995 high of 480p, the group faces serious questions. The first is whether it can build its pet food business to do battle against Pedigree. Margins used to be measured in double digits in this business but are a long way short of that now.

Another question mark hangs over whether the group really needs four divisions. The US distribution business, which is dedicated to McDonald's, seems non-core though Dalgety is unlikely to raise more than book value for it. This business has not been helped by the slowdown in like-for-like sales at McDonald's outlets.

With the dividend barely covered by earnings, the City will start to become restless is there is not a Dalgety revival in the second half and management could find its position under scrutiny.

The animal feeds business should begin to stabilise post BSE, while the food ingredients division is solid enough.

With analysts forecasting full-year profits of £104m falling to £116m, the shares trade on a forward rating of 15 falling to 13. The real attraction is the 8 per cent yield, which should cover the downside risk and makes the shares worth holding.

USAir lifts BA profits

Where will British Airways be in another 10 years' time? Will it still be an airline in the accepted sense of the word or will the craze for shedding staff, cutting costs and outsourcing every conceivable function have turned it into the world's first truly virtual airline? Will it, for that matter, still be called British Airways or will a series of mega mergers have transformed it into a behemoth of the skies, as American or Oriental as it is British?

Those searching for clues in the airline's third-quarter results may be a little disappointed. Despite BA's goal of shaving £1bn from its cost base through the much-vaunted Business Efficiency Programme, employee costs are up by 10 per cent this year. Meanwhile, progress towards gaining regulatory approval for the American Airlines alliance is proving painfully slow.

Had it not been for £11m in dividend arrears from USAir, its erstwhile transatlantic partner, BA would have been celebrating a decade of private ownership not with another set of record figures but with a small decline in third-quarter profits.

True, many of the efficiencies pushed through by BA's chief executive Bob Ayling, such as packing the accounts department off to Bombay, are yet to show through. Nor can any amount of inspired leadership stop aviation fuel prices rising by a third – the drag factor that is doing most to hold BA back.

Volatile oil prices, are, however, a fact of life for airlines. In the short run, BA will be judged on how well it has hedged its oil exposure and how quickly it can plug the gap in revenues that will be left when the USAir code-share agreement expires in April.

In the longer term, the challenge is to make the American alliance work in an era of open skies and increased competition while preventing the BA brand name from being devalued by too enthusiastic an approach to cost cutting.

Assuming full-year profits of £640m this year and £710m in 1998 the shares, up 11p at 597.5p, stand on a forward multiple of 12, falling to 11. They should still have some way to go, but given the uncertainties BA faces, a repeat of the 500 per cent return shareholders have enjoyed in the first decade of private ownership looks implausible.

Still questions over Admiral

Sir Lawrie Barratt, the chairman of Britain's second-biggest housebuilder, was quick to criticise rival Bryant for overpaying last year when it bought Admiral Homes for £62m. The deal gave Bryant a ready-made land bank in the South-east of England, where the recovery in the housing market has been strongest and development land is in shortest supply due to delays in planning permission.

But analysts remain perplexed as to why Bryant paid £6m more than Admiral's net asset value to buy, in effect, a job lot of plots. Normally purchasers would expect a discount, especially as Admiral was in the red at the time.

The result is that at 25 per cent, Bryant's plot cost to selling price ratio continues to be a burden. House price inflation was only modest in the six months to November and the group's average selling price, including Admiral, fell by £3,000 to £113,000, hit by a change in mix as more three-bed and fewer four-bed properties were sold.

But a rise in operating margins to 8.6 per cent from 6 per cent helped push pre-tax profits 52 per cent higher to £15.5m on sales of £257m (£232m). The maintained dividend of 1.45p was covered by earnings of 3.7p (2.4p).

Bryant sees a progressive improvement in confidence among home buyers rippling out from the South-east. It cites as evidence a 30 per cent rise in net reservations continuing into the second half – even if the corresponding year's figures were lousy – and it looks on course to hit its target of building 4,000 homes this year.

Better still, there are no signs yet that the prospect of a general election by May and the possibility of a rise in interest rates is affecting purchasers' confidence. With a fair wind and a post-election "honeymoon", double-digit margins are a distinct possibility next year as Bryant recovers from a low base.

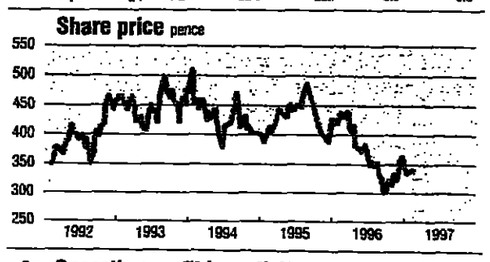
But concerns about the Admiral deal and the continued presence of the small construction division will surely limit its recovery potential.

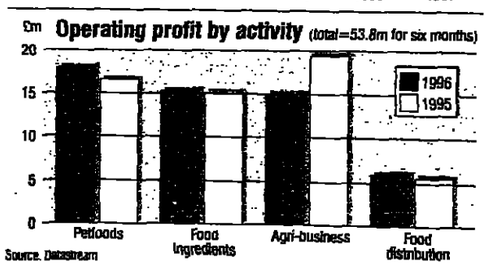
UBS has raised its pre-tax profits forecast for the year to May by £2m to £37m. That puts the shares, up 0.5p to 150p, on a chunky forward multiple of 17, yielding 4.2 per cent. High enough.

Dalgety : At a glance

Market value: £987m, share price 341p

Trading record	full year 94	95	96	half year 95/6	96/7
Turnover (£bn)	4.9	4.9	4.34	2.12	2.12
Pre-tax profits (£m)	120.1	93.7	89.6	69.4	43.0
Earnings per share (p)	35.2	20.4	20.4	10.8	9.3
Dividends per share (p)	20.2	22.0	22.7	8.5	8.5





Source: Datastream

Personal banking. Anytime. Anywhere. Worldwide. By phone. Free.
Call us anytime on 0800 00 88 00. Wherever you are, CitiPhone Banking gives you free 24 hour access to your account 365 days a year.
Ref No. 1INDC01 Citibank International p.l.c. Registered office: 336 Strand, London WC2R 1HB. ® Registered mark of Citibank, N.A. Ultimately owned by Citigroup, New York, USA.
CITIBANK
THE CITI NEVER SLEEPS.

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاجل

market report / shares

Data Bank

FTSE 100	4307.7	-0.1
FTSE 250	4596.7	+4.6
FTSE 350	2128.1	+0.4
SEAQ VOLUME	817.8m shares, 84,453 bargains	
Gilts Index	96.32	+0.02

Share spotlight

share price, pence

Railtrack steams ahead on hopes of secret riches

MARKET REPORT

DEREK PAIN

stock market reporter of the year

Railtrack was on the express line as the stock market sensed it could have a tantalising tale to tell at an investment presentation next week. The shares led blue chips with a 16.5p gain to 391.5p, a two-day advance of 34p.

The City has for some time been beguiled by what are regarded as Railtrack's secret riches – largely its property potential.

Some analysts have already come to the conclusion the group could comfortably accommodate a Labour windfall tax. They appear to be relaxed about even a £1bn charge, although a much lower imposition is thought to be more likely.

There is a widespread feeling that Railtrack shares remain undervalued and one stockbroker is thought to be talking about them reaching 475p. The shares were privatised in May when private investors paid a 190p first instalment and institutions 200p.

The rest of the market was overwhelmed by New York. Friday's strong late run led to a confident morning session but when Wall Street traded hesitantly in the afternoon Footsie looked increasingly harassed and by the close was limping along with a 0.1-point fall. Still, before the US blues took their toll, it did manage a new trading high of 4,330.

The American connection was also less than kind to **LucasVarity** and **EMI**. The aerospace and car components group retreated 5.5p to 197.5p as the market continued to ponder how it intends to reconcile the payment demands of its US and UK investors.

EMI, 25p off at 1,101p was ruffled by indications of poor US sales; nine-month results are due later this month.

Financials remained in demand. SBC Warburg helped sentiment by producing intriguing targets for three leading fund managers. It suggested **Mercury Asset Management**, its former offshoot, should hit 1,500p; the price rose 26.5p to 1,382.5p.

The investment house also put a 1,550p target on **M&G** (up 3.5p at 1,380p) and 350p on **Invesco** (7.5p higher at 314.5p.).

Fund managers have romped ahead as the market has awaited a Continental strike. Dresdner of Germany and ABN Amro of Holland are two groups thought to be seeking a fund management capture. And just to add to the excitement Merrill Lynch, the US group, is now said to have joined the chase.

Insurances were again the subject of bid speculation with **General Accident**, up 26p to 872p and **Prudential Corporation** moving 9.5p higher to 581.5p.

Abbey National, expected to raise the stakes in the battle for Scottish Amicable, was little changed at 780.5p. **Lloyds TSB**, kicking off the banking profits season on Friday, put on 6.5p to 493p.

British Gas was unchanged at 243.5p as the grey market opened in its two constituents in their when-issued form. BG, the transportation side, traded at 173p (after 186.5p) and Centrica, the gas supplier, at 69.75p (after 72.5p).

Oils were subdued. **Enterprise Oil** fell 2p to 672.5p with Merrill Lynch moving its stance to sell. Lower crude prices also hit sentiment; **British Petroleum** fell 15.5p to 721p.

Football shares were rattled by suggestions from accountants Coopers & Lybrand they were overpriced by as much as £1bn. In the past year the value of football clubs has increased 400 per cent. The accountants believe only a handful can justify current valuations.

So **Southern Leisure** (Southampton), **Sheffield Utd** and **Loftus Road** (QPR) felt the downward tug; even **Manchester Utd** gave ground, off 10.5p to 693.5p.

Granada fell 17.5p to 895p as chairman Gerry Robinson sold 57,500 shares at 914p. He now has 301,000.

Storehouse rose 12.5p to 292.5p. Morgan Stanley believes the shares are over the worst and will reach 335p.

Peptide Therapeutics jumped 40p to 369p on an alliance with SmithKline Beecham to develop allergy vaccine and **Shield Diagnostic** added 23p to 285p despite top-slicing by a venture capitalist.

Profit warnings were again a feature. **Toad**, engaged in vehicle security, reversed 19.5p to 41.5p; **VDC**, a pharmaceutical group, slumped 110p to 165p and **Triad**, a computer operation, crashed 45p to 228.5p.

Portsmouth & Sunderland Newspapers jumped 62.5p to 820p in response to a 150,000 share trade at 825p.

Newcomer **C&B Publishing** continued to push ahead, up another 15p at 180p, and **Internet Technology** rose 13p to 56.5p as Jan Murray, founder of PC World (now part of Dixons) took over as chairman.

Taking Stock

Emerald Energy rose 1p to 5.25p in busy trading. An analysts presentation, due next week, created the excitement. Managing director Peter Winton intends to discuss the company's Colombian drilling programme. There is considerable excitement about Emerald's venture. Stockbroker T Hoare says if the wells come up to scratch they would be worth up to 24p a share; US operations could add a further 4p a share.

Alpha Omikron, described as an emerging markets specialist, fell 0.25p to 3.75p. After the market closed it said Henderson Crosthwaite had resigned as broker and adviser.

Tile maker Quiligotti gained 6.5p to 21.5p as shareholders who helped save the company sold 50.75 per cent of the capital at 20.5p to institutions.

Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items.
Other details: r Ex rights x Ex-dividend a Ex all u Unlisted Securities Market s Suspended pp Partly Paid pm Nil Paid Shares ‡ AIM Stock   Source: FT Information

The Independent Index

The index allows you to access real-time share prices by phone from London Stock Exchange. Simply dial 0891 123 335, and when prompted to do, so enter the 4-digit code printed next to each share. To access the latest financial reports dial 0891 1233 followed by one of the two-digit codes below.

FTSE 100 - Real-time	00	Sterling Rates	04	Privatisation Issues	36
UK Stock Market Report	01	Bullion Report	05	Water Shares	39
UK Company News	02	Wall St Report	20	Electricity Shares	40
Foreign Exchange	03	Tokyo Market	21	High Street Banks	41

Anyone with a tone-dial telephone can use this service. For a detailed description of The Independent Index, including its portfolio facility, phone 0891 123 333. For assistance, call our helpline 0171 873 4378 (9.00am - 5.00pm).
Calls cost 50p per minute (day time), and 45p at all other times. Call charges include VAT

Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000	Stock	Vol'000
ASDA Group	3400000	Vodafone	1020000	Hanson	880000	National Power	680000
British Gas	2220000	Lloyds TSB	970000	Rolls Royce	880000	Tesco	680000
Guinness	1380000	BP	960000	Prudential	710000	Royal & Sun Alliance	670000
BT	1150000	Orange	910000	Bank of Scotland	700000	NFC	660000
Pilkington	1090000	Tomkins	900000	BAT Inds	690000	Sears	630000

FTSE 100 index hour by hour

Open 4304.4 down 3.4	11.00 4319.8 up 12.0	14.00 4325.6 up 17.8
09.00 4302.9 down 4.9	12.00 4321.6 up 13.8	15.00 4321.9 up 14.1
10.00 4321.5 up 13.7	13.00 4325.1 up 17.3	16.00 4313.8 up 6.0
		Close 4307.7 down 0.1

Share price tables (1996/97 High, Low, Stock, Price, Chg, Yld, P/E, Index Code)

Alcoholic Beverages
[illegible]

Banks, Merchant
[illegible]

Banks, Retail
[illegible]

Breweries, Pubs & Rest
[illegible]

Building/Construction
[illegible]

Building Materials
[illegible]

Chemicals
[illegible]

Distributors
[illegible]

Diversified Industrials
[illegible]

Electricity
[illegible]

Electronics
[illegible]

Engineering
[illegible]

Engineering Vehicles
[illegible]

Extractive Industries
[illegible]

Food Manufacturers
[illegible]

Gas Distribution
[illegible]

Health Care
[illegible]

Household Goods
[illegible]

Insurance
[illegible]

Internationals
[illegible]

Investment Companies
[illegible]

Investment Trusts
[illegible]

Leisure & Hotels
[illegible]

Life Assurance
[illegible]

Media
[illegible]

Oil Exploration
[illegible]

Oil, Integrated
[illegible]

Other Financial
[illegible]

Pharmaceuticals
[illegible]

Printing & Paper
[illegible]

Property
[illegible]

Retailers, Food
[illegible]

Retailers, General
[illegible]

Support Services
[illegible]

Telecommunications
[illegible]

Textiles & Apparel
[illegible]

Tobaccos
[illegible]

Transport
[illegible]

Water
[illegible]

Government Securities

Index-linked
[illegible]

Shorts
[illegible]

Undated
[illegible]

Mediums
[illegible]

Longs
[illegible]

Rights Issues

Stock	Price	Chg
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Recent Issues

Stock	Price	Chg
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

PEPs

"Tax free investing from just £30 a month. Interested?"

PEP up your savings

0500 28 28 20

Guardian Direct

The Guardian Direct Top 100 tracker PEP is a unit trust investment so the value of units can go down as well as up. On the encashment of the units you may receive back less than you invested. Tax legislation may change in the future. The value of any tax relief depends upon the financial circumstances of the investor.

Guardian Direct Services Ltd is a Representative only of the Guardian Financial Services marketing group (which is regulated by the Personal Investment Authority) for life assurance, pensions and unit trust business. Guardian Unit Managers Ltd is regulated by IMRO in the conduct of investment business. Guardian Direct Services Ltd and Guardian Unit Managers Ltd Registered in England No. 446043 and 915719 Registered office Royal Exchange London EC3V 3LS. A member of the Guardian Royal Exchange Group. Guardian Direct Services Ltd is not available in the Channel Isles and Isle of Man. Calls may be recorded. You may invest up to £6,000 per tax year in the Guardian Direct Top 100 tracker PEP.

This could be a once-in-a-lifetime turning point for the dollar

Hamish McRae

It is very difficult to catch a cyclical turning point until after the event. Thus you have to wait at least a year to be clear that, for example, a recession is over, a currency has reversed its path, or that the next movement in interest rates will be up rather than down.

But if it is hard enough to catch a cyclical turning point, how much harder it is to catch a long-term, secular one. Here you are not dealing with a change that will take place every three to seven years, but rather one that takes place every 50 or 100 years. Anyone who claims to have identified such a turning point needs to hang the large public health warning: "This idea may be very wrong."

Apply this to the notion that it is not just a cyclical change in the value of the dollar which has taken place in the last two years but also a secular change.

Since the middle 1950s the dollar has been a weak currency. The weakness was not fully revealed until the Bretton Woods system of fixed exchange rates began to collapse at the end of the 1960s (the trigger was the devaluation of the other reserve currency, sterling, in 1967). But once post-war Europe began to recover and the dollar shortage of the 1940s was replaced with a dollar surfeit, it gradually became clear that sooner or later the dollar would start a long decline. The principal beneficiaries were of course the mark and the yen.

Now both the mark and the yen are weak for cyclical reasons, but if the long-term trend of the dollar is intact then in another five or so years the dollar will be down in the dumps and at the bottom of that cycle it will be lower than it was two years ago.

If, on the other hand, the downward trend has reversed, those levels of two years ago will never be reached again. The dollar will never – or at least not in our lifetime – be back at Y80.

Could this be right? Here are five reasons why it might, and one why it might not.

First, we are moving into a world of zero inflation, or as near zero as makes no difference. In the past one of the main reasons for currency adjustments has been differential inflation. In a world of high inflation some countries will inflate at, say, 10 per cent and others at 5 per cent, so that there will need to be adjustments every couple of years to keep them in line. But in a world of near-zero inflation you might have one country inflating at 1 per cent and another at 2 per cent. Maybe, once every 15-20 years you might need to have a change in parity, but it would not need to be very often, and it might well be that during this period the underlying performance of the higher-inflation country would improve enough not to need a currency adjustment at all.

Result: even if the US does have slightly faster inflation than Germany and Japan (as it does at the moment) the dollar may still be able to rise. It is not far from its average position in recent years (see graphs) so even after this recent rise there is still some leeway for it to move further. In fact it is probably still a bit undervalued.

If the downward trend has been reversed, those levels of two years ago will never be reached again. Could this be right?

Two, the fiscal position of the US, much criticised through the 1980s for the excessive deficit, is now under better control than the deficits of either Japan or Germany. True, the US retains the problem of low savings, but if you allow for the substantial private sector pensions of the US and the lack of these in Germany and Japan, the position is much more balanced. Looking ahead, in five years' time the US fiscal position may appear very favourable compared with that of almost all other developed countries.

Three, while the US population is ageing it is doing so at a slower rate than any of the Group of Seven industrial countries. Meanwhile Japan and Germany are ageing fastest. The demographic pattern of a country has a profound impact on its economic vibrancy, quite apart from its effect on savings and investment.

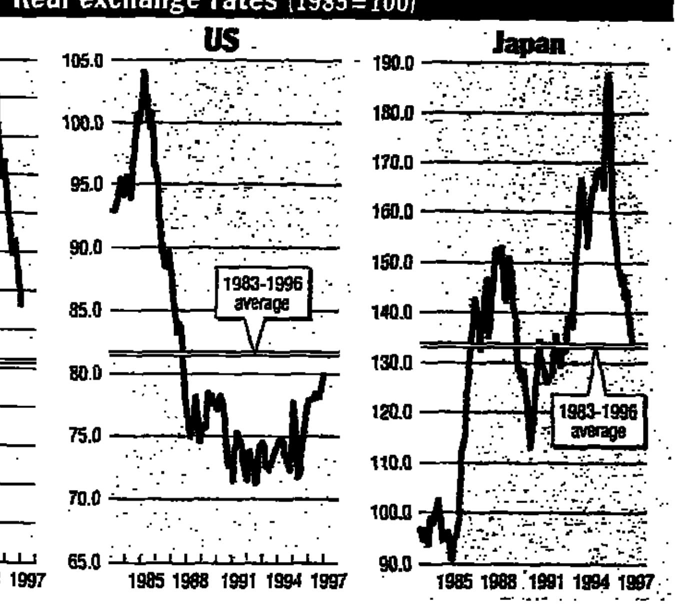
Four, there are signs that the endemic current account surplus of Japan and the endemic deficit of the US may be about to reverse themselves. (The long-term surplus of Germany has disappeared thanks to the costs of unification, and the country may well stay in deficit for another generation until the reconstruction of the former East Germany is complete.) Evidence for a move by the US back into surplus is, admittedly, pretty thin at the moment, but there are some signs that Japan may be moving back towards deficit. BZW examined the impact of a disappearance of the Japanese current account surplus in its latest monthly economic digest, noting that the peak in the surplus as a percentage of GDP was reached as far back as 1986.

Five, the relative decline in the importance of the Japanese economy and the possible disappearance of the mark as a currency if European monetary union goes ahead, leave the dollar clear as the only reliable global currency. The euro might eventually become a reliable currency, but it is unlikely to be trusted by global savers until is establishes a track record. Were EMU to go ahead on a wide basis, then most investors would expect it to be weak.

There is one powerful counter-argument. It is the cultural one: that the low-savings culture is so embedded in the US, and the high-savings culture ultimately so secure in both Japan and Germany, that the value of the yen and the mark will remain solid. Provided the mark still exists, there will certainly be people who will want to hold it, and Japan's enormous net asset position will underpin the value of the yen. The US net deficit position, meanwhile, will continue to undermine the dollar. The US remains the world's largest debtor, and until there is some indication of a turning point in the net asset position it is a bit early to be confident of a turning point in the currency.

And where, might you ask, does the other chronically weak currency, the pound, fit into all of this? Oh, it becomes a strong currency too – but I am afraid that story needs another article.

Real exchange rates (1985=100)



And a pint of economic recovery, please

PEOPLE & BUSINESS

Ken Clarke is known to like the odd pint and Castella, and now he has taken to incorporating these themes in his speeches. Yesterday he told the annual lunch of the Newspaper Conference: "This is a Heineken recovery that is reaching the parts other recoveries could not reach."

Our Ken points out that the current economic rebound is reaching beyond the M25 to the rest of the country.

"This recovery has been more broadly based across the regions of the United Kingdom than previous recoveries. Of course regional differences remain, whether because of history, geography or industrial structure. But each and every region of the United Kingdom is benefiting."

This reminds me of Mr Clarke's recent Mansion House speech when he declared that "the economy is not a Pot Noodle – just add hot water and stir".

Following the speech the Treasury was deluged with Pot Noodles from well-wishers. No doubt Ken is looking forward to several lorries full of lager rolling though the Treasury gates.

Kenneth Clarke: The drinking man's Chancellor

The bankruptcy brigade at accountants Price Waterhouse are preening themselves this year after their trainee receivers did well in the latest joint insolvency examination: "All nine of the firm's first-time candidates passed – contrasting starkly with the national average pass rate of 31 per cent."

The corporate gravediggers are also proud to announce that in the last three years PW candidates have won five of the nine available prizes. What they neglect to add is that two of those have been Price Waterhouse prizes. Question: Is this a conflict of interest? Discuss.

Investment circulars from Panmure Gordon's engineering team don't just limit themselves to "Buy FKI and sell GKN." **Harry Phillips**' latest effort also covers some "great racing at Newbury".

The circular dated last Friday adds: "We take Cheryls Lad to win the Tote Gold Trophy whilst in the Grand National Trial at Uttoxeter, Warren Marston has the opportunity to get back on the winning trail riding Mudahim for his boss Jenny Pitman."

In the event, Mr Phillips tells me, "Cheryls Lad didn't run, so no one lost any money, while Mudahim came second at six to one."

This seems pretty poor investment advice, especially considering our own correspondent at Uttoxeter says that Mudahim was "easily beaten by Lord Gyllene, which trotted up."

Coincidentally, **Mike Kerr-Dineen**, chief executive of Credit Lyonnais Laing Securities, had his own horse Polydamas running in the Newbury Tote Gold Trophy. "It came third at eight to one, which is very good considering it's never been over hurdles before," says Mr Kerr-Dineen.

He and his Laing & Cruickshank colleague the Earl of De La Warr own another horse Poteen, which they hope will do well in the 2,000 Guineas later this year.

On a more prosaic note, Mr Kerr-Dineen has just poached another private client investment manager from Quilter Goodison, **David Malpas**. Eighteen months ago Laing & Cruickshank Investment Management nicked Quilters' star team of private client investment managers, Nigel Lloyd, Richard Legg and John Nicholas.

Mr Kerr-Dineen says the latest signing is especially impressive as Mr Malpas, 35, has been with Quilters for 12 years, and his father Peter Malpas was also an old Quilters hand.

To the Brewery, Chiswell Street, London, to a lunch celebrating "The 130th Anniversary Challenge; NEC Harlequins vs Auckland Blues." This was one of those events where you take particular care that you don't spill your wine on anyone, since they could be Jason Leonard, the gargantuan captain of the Quins rugby team, or Sean Fitzpatrick, the even larger captain of Auckland and the All Blacks.

Thankfully the lunch went off without incident. There was some amusement after the loyal toast to the Queen when some of the diners urged Will Carling to get up and say something – I can't think why.

The teams will play each other at the Stoop Memorial ground, Twickenham, next Tuesday. The match is being sponsored by Reuters, who I hear were considering sponsoring he rugby world cup in South Africa two years ago. They were defeated by the asking price – a cool £6.5m. A Quins match looks a lot more affordable.

John Willcock

Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Sterling Spot	1 month	3 months	Dollar Spot	1 month	3 months	D-Mark Spot
US	1.6334	10-8	30-27	1.000	–	–	0.6037
Canada	2.2071	54-49	164-156	1.3513	24-23	75-73	0.8157
Germany	2.7058	69-61	203-193	1.6565	30-28	90-87	1.0000
France	9.1316	217-198	640-608	5.5905	86-81	269-258	3.3749
Italy	2659.7	25-40	45-67	1628.3	27-28	58-60	982.976
Japan	200.63	95-91	281-276	122.83	48-47	149-147	74.1503
ECU	1.3941	21-18	66-61	1.1717	13-14	44-45	0.5152
Belgium	55.830	15-10	42-36	34.180	7-5	20-17	20.6339
Denmark	10.311	222-177	655-556	6.3128	99-79	298-247	3.8109
Netherlands	3.0382	82-74	240-226	1.8601	39-37	121-115	1.1229
Ireland	1.0193	5-1	16-10	1.6025	6-3	10-6	0.3767
Norway	10.715	160-90	380-270	6.5598	50-25	119-69	3.9600
Spain	228.82	5-5	31-13	140.09	93-103	107-112	84.5699
Sweden	12.007	220-160	690-580	7.3508	41-16	152-101	4.4375
Switzerland	2.3325	85-76	239-226	1.4280	40-37	119-114	0.8621
Australia*	2.1579	10-16	15-25	1.3211	14-16	33-35	0.7975
Hong Kong	12.653	93-52	240-183	7.7465	2-0	2-7	4.6764
Malaysia	4.0615	0-0	0-0	2.4865	27-30	80-85	1.5011
New Zealand*	2.3882	64-71	155-168	1.4621	54-56	97-99	0.8826
Saudi Arabia	6.1261	0-0	0-0	3.7505	1-4	5-9	2.2641
Singapore	2.3007	0-0	0-0	1.4085	24-19	70-65	0.8503

Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar	Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1.6337	0.9999	Nigeria	133.163	81.5000
Austria	19.0402	11.6568	Oman	0.6291	0.3850
Brazil	1.7112	1.0473	Pakistan	65.4865	40.0799
China	13.5476	8.2916	Philippines	43.0859	26.3700
Egypt	5.5577	3.4036	Portugal	271.667	166.320
Finland	8.0239	4.9109	Qatar	5.9447	3.6406
Ghana	2841.25	1740.00	Russia	9226.63	5647.00
Greece	425.043	260.140	South Africa	7.1990	4.4060
India	58.5819	35.8650	Taiwan	44.9813	27.5300
Kuwait	0.4939	0.3023	UAE	6.0021	3.6735

Forward rates quoted high to low are at a discount: subtract from spot rate
rate quoted low to high are at a premium: add to spot rate
*Dollar rates quoted as reciprocals.
For the latest foreign exchange rates call 0891 123 3033.
Calls cost 50p per minute (day rate) 45p other times.

Interest Rates

UK		Germany		US*		Japan	
Base	6.00%	Discount	2.50%	Prime	8.25%	Discount	0.50%
France		Lombard	4.50%	Discount	5.00%	Belgium	
Intervention	3.15%	Canada		Fed Funds	5.25%	Discount	2.50%
Italy		Prime	4.75%	Spain		Central	3.00%
Discount	7.5%	Discount	5.00%	10-Day Repo	6.00%	Switzerland	
Netherlands		Denmark		Sweden		Discount	1.00%
Advances	2.50%	Discount	3.25%	Repo (Ave)	4.10%	Lombard	4.125%

Bond Yields

HSBC Markets Research

Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %	Country	5yr	yield %	10yr	yield %
UK	7.0%	6.87	7.50%	7.18	Netherlands	8.75%	4.41	6.0%	5.42
US	6.25%	6.15	6.50%	6.40	Spain	7.9%	5.88	7.35%	6.74
Japan	6.0%	1.45	2.9%	2.45	Italy	7.75%	6.50	7.75%	7.20
Australia	10.0%	7.12	6.75%	7.34	Belgium	9.0%	4.33	6.25%	5.68
Germany	8.0%	4.60	6.0%	5.61	Sweden	13.0%	5.45	6.50%	6.68
France	5.5%	4.37	5.5%	5.51	ECU OAT	6.0%	4.82	5.50%	5.96

Yields calculated on local basis. †new benchmark

Money Market Rates

	O'Night	7 Day	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months	1 Year
Interbank	2 6¼	5½ 6¼	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Sterling CDs	-	-	[illegible]	6½	[illegible]	[illegible]
Local Authority Deps	6	6⅛	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Discount Market Deps	6¼	[illegible]	-	-	-	-
Treasury Bills (Buy)	-	-	[illegible]	[illegible]	-	-
Dollar CDs	-	-	5.17	5.18	5.25	5.42
ECU Linked Dep	-	-	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	4½ 4¼

Tourist Rates

£ Buys		£ Buys		£ Buys	
Australia(Dollars)	2.0830	France(Francs)	8.8500	New Zealand(Dollars)	2.3195
Austria(Schillings)	18.4900	Germany(Marks)	2.6300	Norway(Kroner)	10.3850
Belgium(Francs)	54.1900	Greece(Drachmae)	415.0000	Portugal(Escudos)	285.3500
Canada(Dollars)	2.1540	Hong Kong(Dollars)	12.3300	Spain(Pesetas)	222.8000
Cyprus(Pounds)	0.7840	Ireland(Punts)	0.9925	Sweden(Kronor)	11.8500
Denmark(Kroner)	10.0590	Italy(Lira)	2598.0000	Switzerland(Francs)	2.2700
Holland(Guilders)	2.9550	Japan(Yen)	198.7000	Turkey(Lira)	186130.0000
Finland(Marks)	7.9300	Malta(Lri)	0.5975	United States(Dollars)	1.6000

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract		Settlement price	High for day	Low for day	EstConts traded	Open interest
Long Gilt	(Mar 97)	112-29	113-15	112-28	55033	185421
German Gvt Bd	(Mar 97)	102.66	102.78	102.42	100436	239057
Italian Bond	(Mar 97)	131.08	131.60	130.91	41915	106322
Japan Gvt Bd	(Mar 97)	126.38	126.39	126.30	1282	n/a
3 Mth Sterling	(Mar 97)	93.70	93.73	93.69	11365	103478
	(Jun 97)	93.47	93.54	93.46	19440	112842
3 Mth Euromark	(Mar 97)	96.89	96.89	96.88	6759	206209
	(Jun 97)	96.89	96.89	96.87	8677	171615
3 Mth Eurolira	(Mar 97)	93.02	93.06	93.00	10646	35654
	(Jun 97)	93.61	93.68	93.59	9163	76404
3 Mth Euroyen	(Jun 97)	99.43			0	n/a
3 Mth Euroswiss	(Mar 97)	98.28	98.29	98.20	6358	32137
	(Jun 97)	98.28	98.30	98.18	9770	27519
3 Mth ECU	(Mar 97)	95.97	95.97	95.96	457	10339
	(Jun 97)	96.04	96.05	96.03	345	6033
FTSE 100	(Mar 97)	4307.0	4325.0	4290.0	8491	58600
FTSE 250	(Mar 97)	4632.0	4632.0	4632.0	250	6401

Liffe FTSE Index Option

Settlement price: 4312 — closing offer price

Series	4250	4300	4350	4400	Call/Put Total/vols
Feb	82/14	45/29	19/56	5/103	- -
Mar	105/48	75/68	49/93	30/124	- -
Apr	131/77	100/95	75/119	52/146	- -
May	152/90	118/107	91/131	66/157	- -

Energy

Brent Crude IPE 5.30pm ($/barrel)		*chg Yr ago	Gas oil ($/tonne) IPE close		*chg	WTI 6pm		Products † Spot CIF NW Europe	($/tonne)
Mar	20.80	-0.80	Feb	188.25	-2.00	Mar	21.85	Prem.Unleaded	210/212
Apr	20.41	-0.79	Mar	181.25	-4.00	Apr	21.65	Naphtha	218/228
May	20.07	-0.65	Apr	178.25	-4.75	May	21.45	EC Gasoil	185/187
Vol: 38559	Index 21.37		Vol:	22811		Jun	21.15	Heavy Fuel Oil	93/96

*since 5.30pm previous day. Year ago prices average for week. Source ICIS-London Oil Reports. †6pm prices

Commodity Indices

GSCI Indices

	Base date	+Spot	%chg Day	31 Dec	%chg YTD	Year ago	%chg Yr
Index	1970=100	200.15	-2.72	215.26	-9.55	192.94	+0.92
Agricultural	1970=100	233.30	-0.01	231.23	+0.90	284.22	-17.92
Energy	1983=100	72.20	-4.52	85.66	-15.91	64.78	+11.44
Industl Metals	1977=100	179.01	-0.96	168.79	+6.05	187.76	-4.66
Livestock	1970=100	187.41	-0.12	191.03	-1.90	176.15	+6.40
Precious Metals	1973=100	436.87	-0.05	463.54	-5.75	521.06	-16.16

†Close as of 7 Feb 1997

Industrial Metals

London Metal Exchange

	$/tonne Cash	3 mths	Volume	LME Stocks	chg
Aluminium HG	1555.0-56.0	1587.0-88.0	82861	929575	- 8900
Aluminium Alloy	1470.0-80.0	1497.0	1713	73300	- 140
Copper A	2407-12.0	2229.0-30	85859	215825	+ 15325
Lead	649.00	659.00	5367	110975	- 450
Nickel	7700-7710	7790-7800	15680	46224	- 1608
Tin	5820-30	5890-5900	2779	10130	- 190
Zinc	1156.5-58.5	1176.0-78.0	22082	478275	- 2375

Settlement Conversion exchange rates: £/$ 1.6327; $/Dm 1.6541; $/¥ 122.72. Stock volumes & change in tonnes as at Fri 7 Jan '97

Precious Metals

Spink & Son

pm fix /oz	$	£	Coins	$	£		$	£
Platinum	352.50	216.05	Britannia	364	223	Krugrands	341/353	209/216
Palladium	134.25	82.30	Britannia.5 oz	188	115	Sovs	80/90	49/55
Silver spot	491.75	300.95	Britannia.25 oz	93	57	Nobles	351/367	215/225
Gold Bu'n	340.40	208.63	Britannia.10 oz	47	29	Maple Leaf	348/364	213/223

Agricultural

CMS

Cocoa LIFFE £/tonne		Coffee LIFFE $/tonne		Barley LIFFE £/tonne		Potatoes LIFFE £/tonne		Potatoes ATA £/100kg	
Mar	865	Jan	1540	Jan	92.75	Mar	53.00	-	-
May	887	Mar	1545	Mar	93.50	Apr	57.00	Feb	22.90
Jul	908	May	1560	May	90.75	May	62.90	Apr	11.00
Vol:	9595	Vol:	11448	Vol:	unq	Vol:	16	Vol:	50

White Sugar LIFFE $/tonne		Freight LIFFE $10/pt		Wheat LIFFE $/tonne		Corn CBOT	Cents/bushel Hi-Lo	Sett
Mar	303.60	Jan	1490	Jan	92.20			
May	300.60	Feb	1545	Mar	94.50	Mar	275.0-274.28	274.30
Aug	300.90	Vol:	443	May	96.50	May	276.50-275.80	275.80
Vol	2830	Index	1374	Vol:	658	Jul	277.40-276.85	276.85

Other Softs

unq	Maize (No 3)**	$/tonne	unq	Feb/Apr	Soya Oil§	FL/100kg	98.0
Jan/Feb	Copra (†)	$/tonne	132.0	Feb/Mar	Coconut Oil (†)	$/tonne	780.0
Mar	Cotton (NY)	UScent/lb	74.35	Mar	Sunflower Oil§	$/tonne	490.0
unq	Wool	Acent/kg	unq	Feb/Apr	Rapeseed Oil§	FL/100kg	88.0
Mar	Rubber*	Mcent/kg	302.0	Jan/Feb	Groundnut Oil	$/tonne	890.0

Origin: §Dutch/EC - pony origin - †Philippines/Indonesia *Malaysia **N Europe Source: FT Information/Reuters

Latest Unit Trust Prices

Stock	Sell	Buy	Yld
ABN AMRO Pembroke Ltd 37-41 Bedford Row, London WC1R 4JH. Telephone & Dealing: 0171 813 2244			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
AXA Equity & Law Unit Trust Managers AXA Equity & Law Hse, Corporation St, Coventry CV1 1GD. Tel: 01203 553231			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Barclays Unicorn Limited 11 Broadway, Stratford, London, E15 4BJ			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Baring Fund Managers Ltd PO Box 801, 155 Bishopsgate, London EC2M 3YS			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Friends Provident Unit Trust Managers Ltd United Kingdom Hse, Castle St, Salisbury, Wiltshire SP1 3SH Enquiries: 01722 715834 ; Dealing: 01722 716835			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
FP Unit Trusts			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Gartmore Fund Managers Gartmore House, 16-18 Monument St, London EC3R 8QQ. Tel: 0171-782 2000 Dealing only: 01277-264421			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Govett (John) Unit Management Ltd 4 Battle Bridge Lane, London SE1 2HR. Tel: 0171 378 7979			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
HSBC Unit Trust Management Ltd			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Legal & General (UT Managers) Ltd Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TP			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Lloyds Bank Unit Trust Managers Ltd			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
M & G Securities Limited M&G House, Victoria Road, Chelmsford CM1 1FB			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Newton Fund Managers Ltd 2 Festival Square, Edinburgh EH3 9SU			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Northern Rock Unit Trusts Ltd			
Uk Growth	122.1	129.2	d2.51
Northern Rock High Inc	61.26	64.24	d5.92
Perpetual Unit Trust Mngmt Ltd Perpetual House 47-49 Station Rd, Henley on Thames, Oxon RG9 1AF			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Prudential Unit Trusts Ltd 51-59 Ilford Hill, Ilford, Essex, IG1 2DL			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Save & Prosper Securities Ltd 16-22 Western Road, Romford, Essex RM1 3LB			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Scottish Amicable Ut Tst Mgrs Ltd PO Box 14962 Craigforth Stirling, FK9 4ZD			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Singer & Friedlander Inv Funds Ltd 21 New Street, London, EC2M 4HR			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Singer & Friedlander Unit Mgrs Ltd			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Standard Life Unit Trusts			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Stewart Ivory Unit Trust Mgrs Ltd 45 Charlotte Sq, Edinburgh EH2 4HW			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Thornton Unit Managers Ltd Swan House, 33 Queen Street, London EC4A 1AX			
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Virgin Direct Discovery House, Whiting Road, Norwich. Tel: 0345 95 95 95			
Income	108.36	108.36	6.60
UK Index Tracking	141.38	141.38	2.59

Key
d — ex dividend
e — exit charge when units sold
buy — formerly 'offer'
sell — formerly 'bid'
x — Non SIB recognised funds

Copies of the most recent managers' reports and scheme particulars are available from fund managers free on request

A more extensive list of Unit Trusts and Managed Funds, ranked by performance within each sector and including offer prices, is published in Saturday editions of the Independent

"Information professionals rank Financial Times Information as the most important UK business information provider"

Annual Business Information Survey 1996, Headland Business Information

Financial Times Information provides online information from over 5,000 business sources comprising 43 million documents, as well as a database of 3.5 million securities and fundamental data on quoted companies.

For more information contact Andrew Hunt on +44 171 825 8420, or email: info@ft.com For free samples of our services, visit our website: http://www.info.ft.com/

FINANCIAL TIMES Information

FINSTAT - instant PC access to Financial Times Statistical data.
For further information, call Leeanne Gilliar at FT Information on +44 171-825-8430 or email: leeanne.gilliar@ft.com

FINANCIAL TIMES Information

Rain

Racing

RESULTS

THE INDEPENDENT RACING SERVICES 0891 261 +

هكذا من الاصل

هكذا من الاجل

Rain dampens trainers' anger

Racing

GREG WOOD

In a normal year, it would need to be a fairly thin news day before "rain in February" became a worthwhile item, but 1997 is anything but normal, and reports that Cheltenham racecourse received a thorough soaking on Sunday night swept all before them on racing's bush telegraph yesterday. With just four weeks to go to the National Hunt Festival, Philip Arkwright, the clerk of the course, briefly postponed plans to water the track artificially, and several trainers who have been grumbling about the prevailing fast ground suddenly fell silent.

At least, they did for the moment. The post of clerk of the course at Cheltenham is one of the most desirable the sport can offer, but from the start of February onwards, Arkwright can be fairly sure that each morning's browse through the trade papers will see another verbal grenade or two heading in his direction.

David Nicholson and Jim Old, both of whom would like an easy surface for their respective Champion Hurdle candidates, Relkeel and Collier Bay, will now be a little happier. Others, though – Jessica Harrington, who prepares the fast-ground specialist Space Trucker, springs to mind – may feel that their own chances have suffered as a result. For punters, too, long-cherished ante-post slips may suddenly appear rather less valuable.

Some would argue that Arkwright should simply let nature take its course, but the possibility of firm ground for the Festival is not one he is prepared to entertain. "We've had about 7mm of rain, just over a quarter of an inch," he said yesterday, "but it's not as much as we need and although there are fronts coming in, my local forecaster does not think it will amount to all that much."

The "local forecaster", by the way, is not an ageing shepherd with a bit of seaweed hanging from his porch, but, less romantically, a contact at the Bristol weather centre.

"You're never going to satisfy everybody," Arkwright said, "but we have a perfectly clear policy and we will not divert from it, which is that we should produce good ground for the Festival meeting.

"This is an exceptional year and it is probably going to take exceptional steps to do that, but we think it is in the best interests of the majority, and most importantly of the safety of the horses, that it should be no faster. I consider that will require two inches of rain between now and then, and if not rain, artificial water."

The concern, of course, is that while modern watering systems are admirably efficient at easing the ground, no one has yet devised a system to remove excess moisture if the weather proves unexpectedly harsh.

"It is a danger," Arkwright admits, "but much more so if you are watering from November to January and racing on it when it's wet. We have two courses which have not been raced on and as a result they will take a lot more water."

The appearance of a tropical storm over the brow of Cleeve Hill 24 hours before race-day would be excellent news for Wally Sturt, the owner of Collier Bay, who yesterday confirmed that, as expected, the champion hurdler will defend his title on 11 March without the benefit of another prep race. Ante-post punters, though, seem to feel that Arkwright's prayers will be answered, and stepped in yesterday to back Make A Stand, the Tote Gold Trophy winner, down to 8-1 (from 12-1) with William Hill to win the championship in his novice season.

Another novice who may upstage his seniors at the Festival is Dorans Pride, second-favourite for the Gold Cup. Michael Hourigan, his trainer, said yesterday that the 1995 Stayers' Hurdle winner will probably run in the Kinloch Brae Chase at Thurles on Thursday, rather than the Red Mills Chase at Gowran Park two days later. The latter race may now offer Imperial Call, who won the Gold Cup 11 months ago, a straightforward chance to record his first victory of the season.

RICHARD EDMONDSON
NAP: Naughty Future
(Ayr 3.10)
NB: Mr Knitwit
(Ayr 3.40)

Cheltenham Gold Cup Chase (3m 2f 110yds)

Horse (Trainer)	Coral	William Hill	Ladbrokes	Tote
Imperial Call (F Sutherland)	4-1	7-2	7-2	7-2
Dorans Pride (M Hourigan)	5-1	9-2	4-1	9-2
Danoli (T Foley)	6-1	7-1	6-1	6-1
Coome Hill (W Dennis)	6-1	8-1	8-1	9-1
Dublin Flyer (T Forster)	8-1	8-1	6-1	9-1
One Man (G Richards)	10-1	10-1	*8-1	10-1
Mr Mulligan (N Chance)	14-1	14-1	12-1	12-1
Addington Boy (G Richards)	14-1	14-1	12-1	14-1
The Grey Monk (G Richards)	12-1	16-1	12-1	12-1
Banjo (D Nicholson)	16-1	20-1	16-1	20-1

*Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Cheltenham, Thursday, 13 March) * - with a run*

Williamson taken to 50 by Rule

Norman Williamson's season, which began with a break up with the Kim Bailey stable but which has produced a sackful of big-race successes, reached another high point when the Irishman recorded his 50th winner of the term at Hereford yesterday on Cardinal Rule.

"At the beginning of the season, 50 winners was my target," Williamson, now a freelance, said. "Everything's going superbly well at the moment and all those miles I clocked up on the motorways at the start of the season have paid off and I'm very pleased.

"With Cheltenham and Aintree and all the big races still to come hopefully the winners have not stopped flowing yet."

Williamson's winners this season have included Jodami in the Peter Marsh Handicap Chase at Haydock and Master Tribe in The Ladbroke at Leopardstown.

Alex Harvey, 26, assistant to Oliver Sherwood for five years, sent out his first winner as a trainer when High Learie made all at Plumpton.

RACING'S FUTURES MARKET

Bookmakers' ante-post lists are racing's futures market. Readers can catch up with the latest developments – best prices are in bold – in this sphere with *The Independent*'s Tuesday service

Champion Hurdle (2m 110yds)

Horse (Trainer)	Coral	William Hill	Ladbrokes	Tote
Collier Bay (J Old)	3-1	3-1	5-2	7-2
Large Action (O Sherwood)	5-1	5-1	9-2	4-1
I'm Supposin (K Prendergast)	8-1	7-1	8-1	8-1
Relkeel (D Nicholson)	7-1	7-1	8-1	8-1
Space Trucker (Mrs J Harrington)	8-1	6-1	7-1	7-1
Make A Stand (M Pipe)	10-1	8-1	8-1	10-1
Sanmartino (D Nicholson)	10-1	10-1	10-1	9-1
Dato Star (J M Jefferson)	12-1	16-1	14-1	14-1
Boardroom Shuffle (J Gifford)	20-1	25-1	20-1	16-1
Castle Sweep (D Nicholson)	25-1	25-1	25-1	20-1
Mistinguett (N Twiston-Davies)	40-1	25-1	25-1	16-1

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Cheltenham, Tuesday, 11 March)

Queen Mother Champion Chase (2m)

Horse (Trainer)	Coral	William Hill	Tote
Klairon Davis (A L T Moore)	3-1	9-4	11-4
Viking Flagship (D Nicholson)	3-1	3-1	7-2
Ask Tom (T Tate)	5-1	9-2	6-1
Strong Promise (G Hubbard)	6-1	6-1	5-1
Sound Man (E O'Grady)	7-1	8-1	6-1
Arctic Kinsman (N Twiston-Davies)	16-1	16-1	16-1
Double Symphony (C Brooks)	16-1	doubtful	14-1
Martha's Son (T Forster)	16-1	16-1	20-1
Merry Gale (J Dreaper)	20-1	14-1	14-1
Gales Cavalier (D Gandolfo)	16-1	16-1	33-1
Or Royal (M Pipe)	25-1	25-1	25-1
Lord Dorcet (J Charlton)	25-1	33-1	25-1
Certainly Strong (D Nicholson)	50-1	doubtful	16-1
Idiots Venture (A O'Brien)	66-1	50-1	40-1
Time Won't Wait (R Phillips)	100-1	50-1	40-1
Seek The Faith (M Sheppard)	100-1	100-1	250-1

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Cheltenham, Wednesday, 12 March)

Triumph Hurdle (2m 1f)

Horse (Trainer)	Coral	William Hill	Ladbrokes	Tote
Shooting Light (P Murphy)	7-1	7-1	6-1	6-1
White Sea (M Pipe)	7-1	6-1	6-1	6-1
Kerawi (N Twiston-Davies)	10-1	10-1	12-1	10-1
Pomme Secret (M Pipe)	16-1	16-1	12-1	12-1
Commanche Court (T Walsh)	12-1	14-1	12-1	25-1
Far Dawn (Mrs A Perrett)	20-1	25-1	20-1	20-1
Summer Spell (N Henderson)	20-1	20-1	25-1	20-1
Haysain (K Bailey)	16-1	25-1	25-1	25-1
Disallowed (Miss H Knight)	33-1	33-1	33-1	25-1
Noble Lord (R Buckler)	33-1	25-1	33-1	20-1

Each-way a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 (Cheltenham, Thursday, 13 March)

Beer and cheer for delighted Davis

Snooker

Steve Davis, whose tournament tipples are usually tea and milk, partied into the early hours yesterday after winning the Benson and Hedges Masters title for the third time with an extraordinary 10-8 victory over Ronnie O'Sullivan at Wembley Conference Centre.

"I am going to drink a lot of beer. There's no way I'll be driving home after this," Davis said, after an amazing recovery which saw him overturn an 8-4 O'Sullivan advantage.

The six-times world and UK champion won £135,000 – the largest single cheque of his 19-year professional career – and got his hands on a piece of silverware for the first time since capturing the Welsh Open in January 1995.

In addition, a 130 clearance, which was the highlight of a six-frame finishing burst, secured the event's £15,000 highest-break bonus. The two combined to carry Davis's total career earnings over £4.5m.

"This has got to go down as one of my best-ever performances," 39-year-old Davis said. His unequalled career total of titles now stands at 71.

Davis cited a summer fitness regime, new practice partners and an easier, freer "cue action" as possible factors behind his return to the limelight.

BENSON AND HEDGES MASTERS (Wembley Conference Centre) Final: S Davis (Eng) bt R O'Sullivan (Eng) 10-8. **Frame scores (Davis first):** 0-116, 0-113, 72-13, 38-67, 78-50, 0-123, 62-46, 63-1, 32-96, 52-72, 7-122, 4-75, 109-0, 60-27, 130-1, 63-48, 74-46, 68-1

Double spin slows McRae

Rallying

Britain's Colin McRae had to settle for fourth place as Kenneth Eriksson swept to victory on home soil in the Swedish Rally yesterday. McRae's challenge ended when he twice spun his Subaru.

SWEDISH RALLY (Karlstad): Final positions: 1 K Eriksson (Swe) Subaru 3hr 51min 49sec, 2 C Sainz (Sp) Ford +16sec, 3 T Makinen (Fin) Mitsubishi +26, 4 C McRae (GB) Subaru +31, 5 T Radstrom (Swe) Toyota +2min 58sec, 6 A Schwarz (Ger) Ford +3:56, 7 M Jonsson (Swe) Toyota +3:58, 8 M Gronholm (Fin) Toyota +4:15, 9 M Jonsson (Swe) Ford +5:13, 10 S Blomqvist (Swe) Ford +6:46. **World Championship standings (after two rounds):** 1 Sainz 12pts, 2= P Liatti and Eriksson 10, 4 Makinen 8, 5 Schwarz 4, 6 McRae 3.

RESULTS

HEREFORD

2.00: 1. RANGER SLOANE (R Farrant) 25-1; 2. Operetto 8-1; 3. Sylvester 40-1; 4. O My Love 8-1. 16 ran. 5-1 jt-favs Lady Magnum (pulled up), Storm Tiger (pulled up). 5, 1. (G Fierro, Hednesford). Tote: £38.60; £5.30, £2.90, £8.30, £2.10. DF: £108.80. CSF: £225.18. Tricast: £7,226.51. Trio: Not won; £256.14.

2.30: 1. CARDINAL RULE (N Williamson) 4-1 fav; 2. Boots N All 16-1; 3. Chris's Glen 14-1; 4. Oliver Doclost 11-2. 16 ran. 4, dist. (Miss V Williams, Hereford). Tote: £3.80; £2.10, £2.70, £2.80, £2.70. DF: £45.50. CSF: £63.67. Tricast: £797.57. Trio: £150.60.

3.00: 1. HALONA (G Bradley) 11-10 fav; 2. Moonlighter 10-1; 3. Kosheen 6-1. 16 ran. 2, 17. (C Brooks, Lambourn). Tote: £2.10; £1.60, £3.10, £2.20. DF: £6.90. CSF: £13.20. Trio: £29.10.

3.30: 1. THATS THE LIFE (R Johnson) 14-1; 2. Dr Rocket 6-1; 3. Blazer Moriniere 16-1. 14 ran. 5-2 fav Northern Singer (pulled up). 3½, 4. (T George, Stroud). Tote: £17.80; £3.60, £1.90, £3.10. DF: £62.20. CSF: £98.05. Tricast: £1,290.50. Trio: £847.30. NR: Chain Shot, Monday Club.

4.00: 1. CARACOL (T Dascombe) 6-1; 2. Arioso 14-1; 3. Nicky Wilde 10-1. 16 ran. 11-4 fav Fairelane (5th). 1¼, 9. (J Neville, Newport). Tote: £9.10; £2.30, £4.50, £4.30. DF: £57.70. CSF: £89.24. Trio: £128.50.

4.30: 1. MISS MILLBROOK (Mr E Williams) 4-1; 2. Cape Cottage 12-1; 3. Rusty Bridge 20-1. 18 ran. 9-4 fav Celtic Abbey (pulled up). 25, 22. (D Goldsworthy, Bridgend). Tote: £7.30; £2.00, £6.90, £2.50. DF: £148.70. CSF: £55.27. Trio: £173.60.

5.00: 1. ADDED DIMENSION (X Aizpuru) 9-2; 2. Dontdressfordinner 7-1; 3. Fontanays 2-1 fav. 8 ran. 4, 2. (P Winkworth, Dunsfold). Tote: £7.00; £1.40, £3.40, £1.80. DF: £33.30. CSF: £34.40. Tricast: £76.32. Jackpot: Not won; £2,231.77 carried forward to Leicester today.

Placepot: £13,692.90; £9,252.02 carried forward to Leicester today. Quadpot: £392.30. Place 6: £1598.39. Place 5: £275.95.

PLUMPTON

1.50: 1. KENTAVRUS WAY (M Batchelor) 14-1; 2. Summer Villa 9-2 jt-fav; 3. Derisbay 25-1. 15 ran. 9-2 jt-fav Minster's Madam. 13, 4. (G L Moore, Brighton). Tote: £26.80; £5.80, £1.90, £2.90. DF: £36.80. CSF: £74.25. Tricast: £1,472.93. Trio: £79.60.

2.20: 1. SUPREME ILLUSION (V Smith) 50-1; 2. Hawanafa 4-1; 3. Petros Gem 50-1. 9 ran. 15-8 fav Noblesse Oblige (pulled up). 3½, 3. (John Berry, Newmarket). Tote: £105.60; £8.20, £1.20, £5.70. DF: £213.20. CSF: £218.63. Trio: Not won. NR: Code Red, Lord Ellangowan.

2.50: 1. COOLTEEN HERO (W McFarland) 13-2; 2. Purbeck Cavalier 7-2 jt-fav; 3. Buckland Lad 4-1. 9 ran. 7-2 jt-fav Show Faith (5th). 6, 7. (R Alner, Blandford Forum). Tote: £9.30; £2.60, £1.50, £1.80. DF: £10.10. CSF: £26.58. Trio: £15.90.

3.20: 1. HIGH LEARIE (J A McCarthy) 14-1; 2. Easy Breezy 16-1; 3. Apatura Hati 10-1. 9 ran. 6-4 fav Melnik (pulled up). 2, 9. (A Harvey, Bishops Stortford). Tote: £27.50; £3.80, £2.00, £1.70. DF: £94.80. CSF: £183.56. Trio: £133.40.

3.50: 1. BULA VOGUE (D O'Sullivan) 10-11 fav; 2. Maylin Magic 14-1; 3. Kilshey 14-1. 11 ran. 5, 4. (R Rowe, Storrington). Tote: £2.00; £1.60, £2.60, £3.80. DF: £5.30. CSF: £15.33. Trio: £82.20.

4.20: 1. LOYAL NOTE (Mr S Andrews) 7-1; 2. Trifast Lad 7-2; 3. Sunny Mount 8-13 fav. 5 ran. 2½, ¾. (S Andrews, Luton). Tote: £8.30; £1.60, £1.80. DF: £7.70. CSF: £28.62.

4.50: 1. MAYB-MAYB (T J Murphy) 6-1; 2. Lajadhal 20-1; 3. Millmount 4-1. 8 ran. 5-2 fav Yellow Dragon. 9, 4. (J Neville, Newport). Tote: £4.30; £1.10, £2.60, £3.30. DF: £79.20. CSF: £90.01. Tricast: £484.02. Trio: £110.00. NR: Ben Bowden, First Class, Mirador.

Placepot: £1,567.60. Quadpot: £57.20. Place 6: £1527.61. Place 5: £366.35.

SOUTHWELL

2.10: 1. KALAMATA (N Day) 3-1; 2. Dancing-Alone 33-1; 3. Mafuta evens fav. 6 ran. 5, 8. (J Glover). Tote: £3.90; £1.60, £8.00. DF: £75.90. CSF: £66.54.

2.40: 1. SEA DEVIL (L Charnock) 8-1; 2. Rambo Waltzer 7-4 fav; 3. Dahiyah 15-2. 13 ran. 1¾, 1½. (M Camacho). Tote: £10.90; £3.50, £1.50, £2.60. DF: £8.80. CSF: £22.33. Trio: £12.50. NR: Bold Joker.

3.10: 1. SUPER HIGH (F Norton) 7-1; 2. Chita Castle 4-5 fav; 3. Dancing Cavalier 6-1. 6 ran. Sht-hd, 17. (P Howling). Tote: £13.50; £2.50, £1.40. DF: £6.60. CSF: £13.58.

3.40: 1. THREE ARCH BRIDGE (Dean McKeown) 11-4 fav; 2. Broughton's Pride 4-1; 3. Ellpetite 8-1. 8 ran. 1¾, 8. (M Johnston). Tote: £3.70; £1.70, £1.20, £2.00. DF: £5.20. CSF: £13.79. Tricast: £74.39.

4.10: dead-heat 1. HEAD GIRL (Dean McKeown) 3-1; dead-heat 1. ROSE BURTON (L Charnock) 13-2; 3. Rochea 10-11 fav. 4 ran. Dead-heat, 2½. (C Thornton, T D Barron). Tote: Head Girl £2.30, Rose Burton £4.20. DF: £11.90. CSF: Head Girl, Rose Burton £9.15, Rose Burton, Head Girl £11.93.

4.40: 1. V I P CHARLIE (S Sanders) 7-4 fav; 2. Pat Express 2-1; 3. Windborn 8-1. 7 ran. 11, ½. (J Jenkins). Tote: £2.90; £1.60, £1.80. DF: £6.50. CSF: £5.97.

Placepot: £222.00. Quadpot: £14.10. Place 6: £90.40. Place 5: £16.96.

THE INDEPENDENT
RACING SERVICES
0891 261 +
LIVE COMMENTARIES | RESULTS
LEICESTER 981
AYR 982
LINGFIELD 983
ALL COURSE RESULTS
0891 261 970

LEICESTER

HYPERION
2.00 Macgeorge (nb)
2.30 White Willow
3.00 Dannicus
3.30 Shining Light (nap)
4.00 Pomme Secret
4.30 Beechfield Flyer

GOING: Hurdles – Good to Soft (Good in places); Chases – Good to Firm (Good in places).
Right-hand, undulating course. Run-in 250yds.
Course is 2m SE of city off A6. Leicester station (London, St Pancras – Sheffield line) 2m. ADMISSION: £9 (OAPs £5). Free racecards. CAR PARK: Free.

LEADING TRAINERS WITH RUNNERS: M Pipe — 19 winners from 74 runners gives a success ratio of 25.7% and a loss to a £1 level stake of £20.27; D Nicholson — 14 winners, 48 runners, 29.2%, +£146.72; Mrs J Pitman — 7 winners, 52 runners, 13.5%, -£19.97; Miss H Knight — 4 winners, 17 runners, 23.5%, -£0.50.
LEADING JOCKEYS: A Maguire — 12 winners, 66 rides, 18.2%, -£27.18; R Dunwoody — 10 winners, 50 rides, 20%, -£23.86; M A Fitzgerald — 9 winners, 51 rides, 17.6%, -£13.22; W Marston — 9 winners, 64 rides, 14.1%, +£4.21.
BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Apache Park, High Low, Ashley House (2.30); Courting Danger (4.00).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: None.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Name Of Our Father (4.00) has been sent 205 miles by P Bowen from Haverfordwest, Dyfed.

2.00 WREN HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,200 added 2m 4f 110yds Penalty Value £3,179

1 R/151-25 EVEN BLUE (54) (D) (BF) (Mrs C J Black) Mrs C Black 9 12 0 ... I Railton
2 15-0P1 MACGEORGE (19) (D) (J H Watson) R Lee 7 11 6 ... A Maguire
3 0-4F324 SAILOR JIM (18) (D) (BF) (R A H Perkins) P Dalton 10 11 4 ... N Williamson
4 2452-26 HOWGILL (13) (Major & Mrs Charles Lockhart) T Forster 11 10 7 ... S Wynne B
5 6FP-345 CROPREDY LAD (13) (Richard Hall) P Webber 10 10 5 ... J Osborne
6 P411/6-0 TRIBAL RULER (13) (D) (John Singleton) D McCain 12 10 0 ... D Walsh
7 3F-P60F SPEARHEAD AGAIN (52) (Ian Jeakman) K Bridgwater 8 10 0 ... B Powell
8 044034 COUNT BARACHOIS (USA) (22) (Mrs E H Heath) Mrs E Heath 9 10 0 ... K Gaule
– 8 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True weights: Tribal Ruler, Spearhead Again 9st 11lb, Count Barachois 9st 7lb.
BETTING: 7-4 Macgeorge, 100-30 Even Blue, 9-2 Sailor Jim, 13-2 Cropredy Lad, 8-1 Howgill, 18-1 Tribal Ruler, 20-1 Count Barachois, 25-1 Spearhead Again
1996: no corresponding meeting

FORM GUIDE
MACGEORGE had indicated he would make the grade as a chaser and he got it right at the fourth attempt when making all from Random Harvest in a novices' handicap over this trip at Wetherby. He has the scope to follow up and has the stamina for this stiffer course. Even Blue won two of his three starts over fences last season, taking a notable scalp each time in Parsons Boy and Lord Gyllene. His first run this season was a narrow defeat by the useful River Mandate at Bangor and then ran a better race in the mud than his final position suggests behind Price's Hill and River Mandate again at Towcester. He is a tough competitor and a change of stable since he last ran should not stop him running his usual genuine race. Sailor Jim was denied his usual front-running role at Uttoxeter last time and he ran below his best in fourth. That does not begin to compare with his second to Lord Gyllene there before Christmas or his previous run when giving weight at Haydock. He is capable of going close at his best. Cropredy Lad looked certain to be at least placed when he turned for home in the lead over the course and distance last time only to drop out tamely and beat only two, one of which was Howgill. He made need further and might spoil things for Sailor Jim if he gets to the front. Selection: MACGEORGE

2.30 VICARAGE CLAIMING HURDLE (CLASS F) £3,000 added 2m Penalty Value £2,595

1 3224-10 WHITE WILLOW (10) (D) (Paul Stringer) T Wall 8 11 11 ... R Massey (5) V
2 213/F4P- TULU (353) (D) (Mark Houlston) Mrs J Ramsden 6 11 9 ... R Garritty
3 0 ESPLA (13) (L F Doherty) J S Moore 6 11 8 ... W McFarland
4 51/02-P5 HIGH LOW (USA) (5) (D) (Marco Lankanchi) W Jenks 9 11 8 ... T Jenks B
5 0P30-02 SHEECKY (13) (CD) (Mrs Angela Beard) B McMahon 6 11 8 ... S Ryan (5)
6 0P5606 ADMIRAL'S GUEST (55) (David Ashbrook) W Clay 5 11 5 ... R Johnson V
7 ARABIAN DESIGN (Joe Jennings Ltd) J Finger 5 11 5 ... B Powell
8 0P0-PRP ERNEST ARAGORN (11) (P Lamyman) Mrs S Lamyman 8 11 5 ... R Farrant V
9 516P-PP KHAZARI (USA) (208) (D) (R Brotherton) R Brotherton 9 11 5 ... L Harvey
10 MANABAR (K S Rayner) M Polglase 5 11 5 ... V Smith
11 00 MONTY (57) (M P Alderson) G Yardley 5 11 5 ... V Slattery
12 PPPP ASHLEY HOUSE (11) (B P Hammond) B R Millman 8 11 2 ... D Salter (5) B
13 0 BACKHANDER (115) (Lester Mescall) R Phillips 5 11 2 ... I Railton
14 04/50 SI MOSS (13) (P R Hamss) P Hamss 10 10 11 ... W Marston B
15 05- BRICK COURT (328) (R Johnson Houghton) R Johnson Houghton 5 10 8 ... N Williamson
16 0 MILL DANCER (64) (P W Hiatt) P Hiatt 5 10 8 ... S Wynne
17 06P APACHE PARK (USA) (7) (M G Hynes) M Sheppard 4 10 5 ... D Gallagher B
18 THREESOCKS (K H Burke) B Smart 4 10 3 ... J Lawrence
19 00 BITES (13) (W Meah) T Bill 4 10 0 ... T Eley
– 19 declared –

BETTING: 2-1 Tulu, 11-2 White Willow, 13-2 High Low, 7-1 Sheecky, 10-1 Espla, 14-1 Apache Park, 16-1 Threesocks, 20-1 Brick Court, Khazari, 25-1 Admiral's Guest, Arabian Design, Backhander, Manabar, Mill Dancer, Monty, 33-1 others

FORM GUIDE
TULU would have breezed this on her juvenile form and first time out last season she would have been second to Nahri in a handicap here if she had not fallen at the final flight. Two subsequent outings produced nothing but she went on to win on the Flat at Beverley in June and is not being asked too serious a question on her return to hurdling, always assuming an eight-month absence has not meant trouble. White Willow was not troubled to win a claimer for Mary Reveley at Newcastle in December, though subsequent efforts on the Flat were not so encouraging and he was soon detached in a handicap hurdle at Chepstow last time, albeit in stronger company. A watching brief is the advice. Sheecky has run his best races over this course and last time out chased home Beechfield Flyer here. With so many yet to produce worthwhile form he must be thereabouts at the finish. High Low has not had a lot of racing lately. He also seems on the decline but did lead a big field of platers until the second last at Huntingdon on Thursday. One capable of improvement is Espla. He had winning form up to seven furlongs on the Flat in 1994 and was running for the first time since then when finishing in mid-division in a selling hurdle at Windsor recently. Stablemate Hawanafa so nearly succeeded in the seller at Plumpton yesterday. Selection: TULU

3.00 THURNBY MAIDEN CHASE (CLASS F) £3,500 added 2m 1f Penalty Value £2,627

1 0P00-PP ALTHREY ARISTOCRAT (71) (F Lloyd) F Lloyd 7 11 5 ... S McNeill
2 34-2353 CHARLIE PARROT (11) (Mrs Alison C Farrant) M Pipe 7 11 5 ... Jamie Evans
3 0-30 DANNICUS (18) (Colin Rashbrook) N Babbage 6 11 5 ... V Slattery
4 6P/0P0- FRANK KNOWS (309) (Mrs C M Peacock) T George 7 11 5 ... R Johnson
5 256-FP0 FULL SHILLING (USA) (13) (G C Farr) D Williams 8 11 5 ... Guy Lewis (3) B
6 230-435 JUST BRUCE (19) (A M Heath) Mrs E Heath 8 11 5 ... K Gaule
7 6000/F0- PLEASURE CRUISE (319) (J K S Cresswell) J Cresswell 7 11 5 ... N T Egan (7)
8 6-005 THE SECRET GREY (10) (Clayton Bigley Partnership Ltd) D McCain 6 11 5 ... D Walsh
9 0/F-5 VIRBAZAR (FR) (18) (Mrs E T Smyth-Osbourne) J Smyth-Osbourne 10 11 5 ... G Upton
10 0 WHOD OF THOUGHT IT (20) (Inhurst Farm Stables) P Channings 6 11 5 ... Mr C Vigors (5)
11 3-203SP ELZOBA (FR) (72) (M Pipe) M Pipe 5 10 10 ... C Maude
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 8-11 Elzoba, 5-1 Charlie Parrot, 8-1 Just Bruce, 10-1 Dannicus, 12-1 Virbazar, 16-1 Full Shilling, 25-1 others

FORM GUIDE
Or Royal and Eudipe have shown the strength of the young chasers Martin Pipe has imported from France this season and ELZOBA does not seem highly tried for his first run in this country. The five-year-old did not have as good form in France as those two, but has been placed on several occasions. The stable also has a good first reserve in Charlie Parrot, a fair maiden hurdler with the shape to jump fences. Dannicus showed some promise when staying on in third behind Tompetoo at Chepstow (2m) on his second outing over hurdles and then found three miles too far at Doncaster. He finds himself over fences after only three outings and is not a strapping horse. Virbazar is a lightly raced 10-year-old with little mileage on the clock. He did show some promise before falling at Folkestone on his only start last season and he was a springer in the market when reappearing there last month. In such a weakly contested race as this he could run into a place. Selection: ELZOBA

3.30 TRIAL HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS D) £7,000 added 3m Penalty Value £5,481

1 03-3111 ACT OF PARLIAMENT (19) (D) (J Perriss) K Bailey 9 12 0 ... Mr R Wakley (7) B
2 233P2-0 MUGONI BEACH (13) (Jim Ennis) M Pipe 12 11 12 ... Jamie Evans
3 3P-242U ROMANY CREEK (17) (CD) (A J Thompson) J Pearce 8 11 11 ... N Williamson V
4 62-0140 DONT TELL THE WIFE (18) (D) (Elite Racing Club) C Egerton 11 11 11 ... M Berry (7)
5 2U5-121 SHINING LIGHT (13) (C) (The Deeley Partnership) D Nicholson 8 11 9 ... A Maguire
6 /03FR-0 THE GLOW (13) (Mrs T Brown) Mrs J Pitman 9 11 8 ... R Farrant B
7 40-P33P WELL BRIEFED (26) (D) (Peter Jones) R Buckler 10 11 5 ... B Powell
8 22-2221 MERLINS DREAM (107) (D) (W S Ward) O Sherwood 8 11 3 ... J Osborne
9 011-606 MAKES ME GOOSEY (11) (Allbrstone Ltd) Mrs I McKie 9 10 5 ... L Harvey B
– 9 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Shining Light, 4-1 Merlins Dream, 9-2 Act Of Parliament, 13-2 The Glow, 8-1 Mugoni Beach, Romany Creek, 10-1 Well Briefed, 12-1 Dont Tell The Wife, 14-1 Makes Me Goosey

FORM GUIDE
Act Of Parliament has not looked back since his first run of the season and has won at Windsor, Ludlow and Wincanton. Rupert Wakley has won on him twice and his claim is invaluable. Yet as much as Act Of Parliament has come on, the fact remains that SHINING LIGHT beat him by more than 12 lengths into third at Huntingdon in November. Shining Light has not stood still since then and came back after a narrow defeat by Full Of Life at Exeter to beat Rex To The Rescue going away over two and a half miles here. It was not the longer trip that beat him at Exeter (2m 110yd), rather that rain had made the ground testing. Shining Light meets Act Of Parliament on the same terms as at Huntingdon. Mugoni Beach was making his reappearance in Shining Light's race here and lost touch some way out to trail in last of seven. It will not be easy for Mugoni Beach to find improvement at his age and Merlins Dream has more scope. The eight-year-old ended a frustrating run of seconds when he beat Romany Creek impressively at Huntingdon in October. He has not run since but the runner-up is only 9lb better off for 18 lengths. That was Romany Creek's first run of the season and he has since been touched off by Dont Tell The Wife at Fakenham. While there is nothing between them at the weights, Dont Tell The Wife cannot be relied on to jump as well as he did then. A run over hurdles may have helped sweeten The Glow. He had the form to beat these at his best. Well Briefed continues below his best and any surprise might come from the Towcester specialist Makes Me Goosey. He ran better at Lingfield last time and the more rain the better for him. Selection: SHINING LIGHT

4.00 SOMERBY HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 4YO 2m Penalty Value £2,721

1 13 NAME OF OUR FATHER (USA) (10) (D) (T M Morris) P Bowen 11 5 ... R Johnson
2 1 POMME SECRET (FR) (15) (Elite Racing Club) M Pipe 11 5 ... J Osborne
3 3 ANNA SOLEIL (18) (M G St Quinton) O Sherwood 10 12 ... J A McCarthy
4 42P CIRCUS STAR (19) (BF) (The Ringmasters) D Nicholson 10 12 ... A Maguire
5 P COURTING DANGER (12) (Mrs E A Gandolfo) D Gandolfo 10 12 ... D Fortt (3) B
6 6 DAYDREAMER (USA) (18) (J Henwood) R Buckler 10 12 ... B Powell
7 EZANAK (The West Lounge Partnership) Miss H Knight 10 12 ... J Culloty
8 5 FENCER'S QUEST (22) (S Preston) T Forster 10 12 ... N Williamson
9 004 FONT ROMEU (FR) (118) (Pond House Gold) M Pipe 10 12 ... Jamie Evans
10 GEMINI DREAM (Anthony Harrison) R Johnson Houghton 10 12 ... R Bellamy
11 63 MAGIC COMBINATION (11) (Mrs B Curley) B Curley 10 12 ... L Aspell (3)
12 60 MIGHTY KEEN (7) (M C Banks) M Banks 10 12 ... D Skyrme
13 242 NORTHERN FLEET (10) (BF) (Racing For Pleasure) Mrs A Perrett 10 12 ... C Maude
14 6 PRINCELY AFFAIR (89) (Mrs Jasmine B Chesters) J M Bradley 10 12 ... S Wynne
15 2 SIBERIAN HENRY (89) (C S Tateson) B Smart 10 12 ... J Lawrence
16 02030 STERLING FELLOW (13) (P F Moore) D Williams 10 12 ... M Clarke V
17 0 THE ODDFELLOW (13) (Dr Horace Ngan) N Bycroft 10 12 ... O Pears
18 443F0 TOPAGLOW (18) (Mrs Julie Martin) P Dalton 10 12 ... B Fenton
19 CIRCLED (USA) (David Boden) John A Harris 10 7 ... D Gallagher
20 6 POETRY (61) (Michael H Keogh) M Tompkins 10 7 ... I Railton
21 5 PRECIOUS ISLAND (87) (P Dalton) P Dalton 10 7 ... J Supple
– 21 declared –

BETTING: 13-8 Pomme Secret, 9-2 Magic Combination, 13-2 Circus Star, 8-1 Northern Fleet, 10-1 Anna Soleil, 14-1 Ezanak, Fencer's Quest, Font Romeu, 16-1 Name Of Our Father, 25-1 others

FORM GUIDE
Martin Pipe already has a leading contender for the Triumph Hurdle in White Sea and stablemate POMME SECRET could jump his way into the picture. The former French-trained colt, winner of a claimer on the Flat at Clarefontaine, went to Plumpton for his hurdling debut and was easy to back, suggesting that perhaps not much was expected of him. Soon in front, he shook off hot favourite Avanti Express coming to the last and that could prove to have been a good effort with the second having run previous winner Hoh Warrior to a length here the time before. Magic Combination won three times on the Flat in Ireland and ran second to the useful Theatreworld in a two-mile handicap at Leopardstown after he had made his hurdling debut at Fairyhouse. He ran well for a long way until lack of fitness told behind Three Farthings at Lingfield on his first run over hurdles in this country and should come on for it. Circus Star settled better at Wetherby last time compared to earlier attempts but was struggling when blundering at the third last. Having finished close behind the useful Serenus in both previous starts he should not be ruled out after one poor run. Of the Flat winners in the field, Northern Fleet has done best over hurdles. He stayed well on the Flat and this stiff course should suit him. Anna Soleil's third behind Desert Mountain at Folkestone was a promising start and he can win in the right grade. Selection: POMME SECRET

4.30 OADBY HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m Penalty Value £2,406

1 3110-P0 SHERIFFMUIR (56) (J J W Wadham) Mrs L Wadham 8 12 0 ... J F Titley
2 4/1124-1 MR MORIARTY (24) (D) (D H Bowring) S R Bowring 6 11 6 ... A Maguire
3 46/50-64 RIVER ISLAND (USA) (12) (D) (The White Horse Partnership) J Old 9 11 1 ... G Upton
4 234/321 KINTAVI (55) (D) (S Taberner) T Donnelly 7 10 13 ... T Eley
5 52/4P3-0 CHILL WIND (13) (E H Daley) N Bycroft 8 10 9 ... R Johnson
6 5045-21 BEECHFIELD FLYER (13) (CD) (Mrs M Robertson) W Clay 6 10 8 ... G Tormey
7 U00-04 BOB'S PLOY (12) (Mrs M Barwell) M Tompkins 5 10 4 ... N Williamson V
8 5-0P350 PAST MASTER (USA) (18) (Northern Bloodstock Racing) S Gollings 9 10 4 ... K Gaule
– 8 declared –

BETTING: 9-4 Bob's Ploy, 11-4 Mr Moriarty, 100-30 Kintavi, 7-1 Beechfield Flyer, 10-1 Sheriffmuir, 12-1 River Island, 14-1 Past Master, 20-1 Chill Wind

FORM GUIDE
KINTAVI came back from two years off with a good third at Bangor in November and stepped up on that when chasing home the in-form Circus Line here. He improved again to run out a comfortable seven-length winner back at Bangor a week later and an 8lb rise may not prevent him following up. Wearing a visor for the first time brought about the best run yet over hurdles for Bob's Ploy at Towcester 12 days ago. He kept on well to be a close fourth behind the handicap good thing No Hassle and a similar effort would get him into a place. Mr Moriarty may take on Bob's Ploy. He led from the third and was fighting back so well after being headed at the second last that he would probably have got back up when left clear at the final flight at Catterick recently. It looked an improved performance, though, being fit from the Flat, that is probably as good as he is going to get and a 5lb rise could be difficult to shrug aside. He has been third on the Flat since then. Selection: KINTAVI

AYR

HYPERION
1.40 Political Tower 2.10 Star Selection 2.40 Military Academy 3.10 D'Arblay Street 3.40 Colonel In Chief 4.10 Rallegio 4.40 Merry Masquerade

GOING: Soft.
Left-hand galloping course; run-in 210yds.
Course is E of town on A758. Ayr station (service from Glasgow) 1m. ADMISSION: Club £12; Grandstand £7 (OAPs half-price). CAR PARK: Free.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: None.
WINNERS IN LAST SEVEN DAYS: D'Arblay Street (3.10) won at Kelso on Thursday; Nicholas Plant (4.10) won here on Saturday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: Star Selection (2.10) has been sent 253 miles by J Mackie from Church Broughton, Derbyshire.

1.40 LEVY BOARD NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS E) £2,925 added 2m

1 231135 POLITICAL TOWER (17) R Nixon 10 11 10 ... B Storey
2 63/F54 FILS DE CRESSON (15) J Adam 7 11 10 ... M Moloney
3 00504 SEGALA (53) J O'Neill 6 11 4 ... P Carberry
4 P-43305 BOWCLIFFE (18) Mrs A Naughton 8 11 3 ... M Foster
5 3-22358 TEEJAY'N'AITCH (15) J Goldie 5 11 3 ... G Cahill
6 005-35 BILL'S PRIDE (71) P Monteith 6 11 3 ... A Dobbin
7 0F0 JOE SHAW (10) Mrs M Reveley 4 11 0 ... P Niven
8 05/60-5 NANCYS CHOICE (14) Mrs N Hope 7 11 0 ... J Burke
9 0P-0 SOLSGIRTH (25) J Barclay 6 10 8 ... A Thornton
10 30PP6/ RUNNING GREEN (858) D Moffatt 6 10 1 ... D J Moffatt
11 0/0065 OBVIOUS RISK (3) E Cahill 6 10 0 ... Tristan Davidson (7)
– 11 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weight: Obvious Risk 9st 9lb.
BETTING: 2-1 Joe Shaw, 4-1 Fils De Cresson, 6-1 Bill's Pride, 7-1 Running Green, 8-1 Political Tower, 12-1 Segala, Bowcliffe, Teejay'n'aitch, 20-1 Nancys Choice, Solsgirth, 33-1 Obvious Risk

2.10 RIVER DOON HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS D) £3,650 added 2m

1 0000-1 MONICA'S CHOICE (28) (D) Mrs M Reveley 6 11 12 ... P Niven
2 132-504 COMMON SOUND (17) (D) J Barclay 6 11 6 ... A Thornton
3 6310 STAR SELECTION (24) (BF) J Mackie 6 10 7 ... E Husband (3)
4 3/P4511- MERRY MERMAID (293) (D) B Mactaggart 7 10 6 ... B Storey
5 16003- OUR ROBERT (276) (D) J FitzGerald 5 10 5 ... P Carberry
– 5 declared –

BETTING: 6-4 Monica's Choice, 11-4 Star Selection, 100-30 Our Robert, 4-1 Merry Mermaid, 20-1 Common Sound

2.40 RIVER CREE NOVICE HURDLE (CLASS E) £3,000 added 2m 6f

1 6/0-0361 ADIB (USA) (12) (C) G M Moore 7 12 0 ... M Bentley
2 3/13 MILITARY ACADEMY (73) G Richards 8 12 0 ... P Carberry
3 4 ALLERBANK (15) Mrs J Storey 6 11 7 ... Mr C Storey
4 0 BORDER IMAGE (7) F Murtagh 6 11 7 ... A Roche
5 3-P5 DRAKEWRATH (71) R Bewley 7 11 7 ... D Parker
6 FAYETTE COUNTY J J O'Neill 8 11 7 ... A Thornton
7 0-030 HARFDECENT (21) Mrs M Reveley 6 11 7 ... P Niven
8 0 ROYAL SPRUCE (17) G M Moore 6 11 7 ... J Callaghan
9 5004 SUNNY LEITH (15) P Monteith 6 11 7 ... A Dobbin
10 1360 DOUBLE DASH (25) D Moffatt 4 11 3 ... D J Moffatt
11 042-20 CHERRY DEE (19) P Beaumont 8 11 2 ... B Grattan (5)
12 /P3PP6/ JUST EVE (817) Mrs D Thomson 10 11 2 ... T Reed
13 000400 MEADOWLECK (3) W Young 8 11 2 ... G Cahill
14 00P-5F0 NAWRNOOKEY (53) M Todhunter 7 11 2 ... G Lee (3) B
– 14 declared –

BETTING: 4-6 Military Academy, 5-1 Adib, 6-1 Cherry Dee, 8-1 Harfdecent, 10-1 Fayette County, 14-1 Double Dash, 20-1 Allerbank, 33-1 others

3.10 RIVER GIRVAN NOVICE CHASE (CLASS D) £5,000 added 3m 3f 110yds

1 4225U1 D'ARBLAY STREET (5) W Kemp 8 11 3 ... P Carberry
2 3-1UP5F NAUGHTY FUTURE (5) (C) J J O'Neill 8 11 3 ... R Supple
3 3016P-6 ABBEY LAMP (15) Miss L V Russell 8 10 10 ... A Thornton
4 446P05 BRIGHT DESTINY (15) J Goldie 6 10 10 ... G Cahill V
5 P00403 CLONROCHE LUCKY (18) J Wade 7 10 10 ... K Jones
6 0/5P3 JUDICIOUS CAPTAIN (15) Mrs J Storey 10 10 10 ... Mr C Storey
7 0000-52 NOOSA SOUND (15) L Lungo 7 10 10 ... B Storey
8 0-40006 POCAIRE GAOITHE (8) W Storey 7 10 10 ... R McGrath (5)
9 40R0U6 QUIXALL CROSSETT (3) E Cahill 12 10 10 ... Tristan Davidson (7)
10 0-006 SELDOM BUT SEVERE (7) E Elliott 7 10 10 ... G F Ryan (5)
11 4P SPRINGHILL QUAY (54) (BF) G Richards 8 10 10 ... A Dobbin
– 11 declared –

BETTING: 5-2 Noosa Sound, 11-4 D'Arblay Street, 7-2 Naughty Future, 9-2 Springhill Quay, 8-1 Judicious Captain, 16-1 Abbey Lamp, 25-1 Pocaire Gaoithe, 33-1 others

3.40 RIVER TIG NOVICE CHASE (CLASS E) £4,075 added 2m 5f 110yds

1 122F23 BALLYLINE (17) W Kemp 6 11 11 ... A S Smith
2 12/35-10 LIEN DE FAMILLE (24) J Quinn 7 11 11 ... P Niven
3 032/421 MR KNITWIT (15) (C) P Monteith 10 11 11 ... A Dobbin
4 0/116-P3 COLONEL IN CHIEF (10) G Richards 7 11 4 ... P Carberry
5 FPPP-06 DESPERATE DAYS (21) F Kirby 8 11 4 ... W Dwan
– 5 declared –

BETTING: 5-4 Mr Knitwit, 6-4 Colonel In Chief, 6-1 Ballyline, 7-1 Lien De Famille, 100-1 Desperate Days

4.10 LOCH ENOCH HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS E) £4,500 added 2m

1 U221-11 NETHERBY SAID (21) P Beaumont 7 12 0 ... R Supple
2 P01P-35 BLAZING TRAIL (15) (D) Miss L V Russell 9 11 13 ... A Thornton
3 52-6444 ONE FOR THE POT (25) (CD) Mrs A Naughton 12 11 10 ... M Foster
4 3355-1 NICHOLAS PLANT (3) (C) J Goldie 8 11 4 (7ex) ... G Cahill
5 1524-13 RALLEGIO (15) P Monteith 8 11 0 ... A Dobbin
6 5541P0 EMERALD SEA (USA) (15) J Barclay 10 10 6 ... B Storey
7 330-506 SUPER SANDY (28) (D) F Watson 10 10 2 ... K Johnson
8 406-PF4 FUNNY OLD GAME (17) (C) D McCune 10 10 0 ... Michael Brennan (3)
9 3F5PP5 MONAUGHTY MAN (3) (C) E Cahill 11 10 0 ... M Moloney
– 9 declared –

Minimum weight: 10st. True handicap weights: Funny Old Game 9st 13lb, Monaughty Man 9st.
BETTING: 9-4 Rallegio, 11-4 Netherby Said, 3-1 Nicholas Plant, 7-1 Blazing Trail, 8-1 One For The Pot, 12-1 Super Sandy, 25-1 Funny Old Game, 33-1 Emerald Sea, 50-1 Monaughty Man

4.40 RIVER AYR MAIDEN NATIONAL HUNT FLAT RACE (CLASS H) £1,500 added 2m

1 CHAN MOVE W Smith 5 11 8 ... S Taylor (5)
2 EASBY BLUE S Kettlewell 5 11 8 ... Mr C Bonner (3)
3 4 JUST NED (14) J Haldane 6 11 8 ... N Horrocks (7)
4 34 MERRY MASQUERADE (19) Mrs M Reveley 6 11 8 ... G Lee (3)
5 NO GIMMICKS J FitzGerald 5 11 8 ... F Leahy (3)
6 PRIME EXAMPLE M Todhunter 6 11 8 ... Michael Brennan (3)
7 3 DELIGHTFOOL (14) R Nixon 5 11 3 ... G Cahill
8 LINWOOD G Richards 6 11 3 ... Mr R Hale
9 YOUNG SEMELE J Adam 5 11 3 ... Mr C Storey
10 0 CHIEF CHIPPIE (14) W Kemp 4 10 12 ... S Haworth (7)
11 COOL KEVIN Mrs M Kendall 4 10 12 ... Mrs M Kendall
12 5 CHAMPS-GIRL (24) B Young 4 10 7 ... E Callaghan (3)
– 12 declared –

BETTING: 5-6 Merry Masquerade, 4-1 No Gimmicks, 7-1 Delightfool, 8-1 Linwood, 12-1 Just Ned, Prime Example, 16-1 Easby Blue, 20-1 Young Semele, 33-1 others

LINGFIELD

HYPERION
1.50 Le Sport 2.20 As-Is 2.50 Steamroller Stanly 3.20 Blues Magic 3.50 Broughtons Formula 4.20 Squire Corrie

GOING: Standard.
STALLS: 1m – outside; remainder – inside.
DRAW ADVANTAGE: Low numbers best in sprints.
Equitrack surface; left-hand, sharp undulating course.
Course is SE of town on B2028. Lingfield station (served by London, Victoria) adjoins course. ADMISSION: All enclosures £9. CAR PARK: Club £3; remainder free.

BLINKERED FIRST TIME: Chateauherault (visored) (2.20).
WINNERS IN THE LAST SEVEN DAYS: Apollo Red (4.20) won at Lingfield last Tuesday; Squire Corrie (4.20) won at Wolverhampton last Wednesday.
LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS: As-Is (2.20) & Double Espresso (2.50) sent 270 miles by M Johnston from Middleham, North Yorkshire; Chateauherault (2.20) & Page Boy (4.20) sent 270 miles by P Haslam from Middleham, North Yorkshire.

1.50 HURST POINT LIMITED STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 1m

1 041-612 CHADLEIGH LANE (25) (D) (BF) A Mulholland 5 9 4 ... D Sweeney (5) 2
2 3213-40 FATHER DAN (7) (C) Miss Gay Kelleway 8 9 1 ... D Holland 8
3 350-122 MILOS (5) (C) G L Moore 6 9 1 ... S Whitworth 1
4 0000-02 KI CHI SAGA (USA) (33) M Madgwick 5 8 12 ... A Clark 3
5 000-484 LE SPORT (11) (D) D Nicholls 4 8 12 ... Iona Wands (7) 7 B
6 4-20020 SPENCER'S REVENGE (7) (CD) (BF) P Butler 8 8 12 ... G Bardwell 5
7 11240-3 WHATEVER'S RIGHT (19) (CD) M Usher 8 8 12 ... S Sanders 6
8 530/500- WHITLEY GRANGE BOY (260) J L Eyre 4 8 12 ... S Buckley (7) 4
9 11/0020- SWEET WILHELMINA (94) (CD) Lord Huntingdon 4 8 9 ... D Harrison 9
– 9 declared –

BETTING: 3-1 Le Sport, 9-2 Whatever's Right, 5-1 Milos, 11-2 Sweet Wilhelmina, 7-1 Father Dan, 8-1 Ki Chi Saga, Chadleigh Lane, 16-1 Spencer's Revenge, 20-1 Whitley Grange Boy

2.20 DUNGENESS POINT CLAIMING STAKES (CLASS E) £4,025 added 3YO 1m 2f

1 004-123 CHATEAUHERAULT (14) (CD) (BF) P Haslam 9 3 ... S Drowne 4 V
2 0- SAXONBURY (132) G L Moore 9 3 ... S Sanders 1
3 506-512 AS-IS (17) (C) (BF) M Johnston 8 9 ... D Holland 3
4 0-044 LEG BEFORUM (12) L Montague Hall 8 9 ... W Ryan 2
– 4 declared –

BETTING: 6-13 As-Is, 3-1 Chateauherault, 6-1 Saxonbury, 10-1 Leg Beforum

2.50 BISHOPS ROCK STAKES (CLASS D) £4,900 added 1m 2f

1 3501-12 STEAMROLLER STANLY (21) (C) C Cyzer 4 10 1 ... D Biggs 4
2 00-1 ALARICO (FR) (14) (CD) I Williams 4 9 12 ... D Holland 3
3 033010- DARK AGE (128) (D) R Akehurst 4 9 12 ... S Sanders 5
4 135/650- BRILLIANT RED (279) P Hedger 4 9 7 ... M Richards 1
5 41213-2 DOUBLE ESPRESSO (35) (C) (BF) M Johnston 3 8 2 ... T Williams 2
– 5 declared –

BETTING: 13-8 Steamroller Stanly, 11-4 Alarico, 3-1 Double Espresso, 13-2 Brilliant Red, 10-1 Dark Age

3.20 DURLSTON MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES (CLASS F) £3,300 added 3YO 6f

1 2 BLUES MAGIC (24) (BF) M Bell 9 0 ... G Faulkner (3) 2
2 000-4 BON GUEST (11) T J Naughton 9 0 ... D Holland 5
3 03302-3 CASTLE ASHBY JACK (8) P Howling 9 0 ... F Norton 3 B
4 30-3 ROFFEY SPINNEY (19) R Hannon 9 0 ... R Perham 4
5 000-5 LUCY OF ARABIA (19) J Sheehan 8 9 ... A Daly (5) 1
– 5 declared –

BETTING: 2-1 Blues Magic, 9-4 Roffey Spinney, 7-2 Lucy Of Arabia, 6-1 Castle Ashby Jack, 7-1 Bon Guest

3.50 EDDYSTONE HANDICAP (CLASS F) £3,300 added 2m

1 863-131 SUPREME STAR (12) (C) P Hedger 6 10 0 ... N Varley (3) 2 B
2 6311-21 WOTTASHAMBLES (10) (CD) L Montague Hall 6 9 13 ... D Holland 8
3 1652-32 GUEST ALLIANCE (26) (CD) G L Moore 5 9 8 ... Candy Morris 4
4 6422-51 BROUGHTONS FORMULA (21) (CD) W Musson 7 9 5 ... D R McCabe 6 B
5 6226-05 COLERIDGE (8) (CD) J Sheehan 9 8 2 ... A Clark 1 B
6 3006-05 BLUE AND ROYAL (19) V Soane 5 7 13 ... N Adams 3
7 5000 PYRRHIC DANCE (7) M Haynes 7 7 12 ... G Bardwell 7
8 25-45 CLASSIC ACCOUNT (15) (C) J L Eyre 9 7 10 ... R Ffrench (7) 5
– 8 declared –

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weight: Classic Account 7st 8lb.
BETTING: 9-4 Wottashambles, 5-2 Broughtons Formula, 7-2 Supreme Star, 8-1 Classic Account, 10-1 Coleridge, 12-1 Blue And Royal, 14-1 Guest Alliance, 25-1 Pyrrhic Dance

4.20 NEEDLES HANDICAP (CLASS D) £4,900 added 6f

1 01206-1 PAGEBOY (35) (CD) P Haslam 8 10 0 ... S Drowne 1
2 4000-61 ROBO MAGIC (12) (CD) L Montague Hall 5 9 12 ... D Holland 7
3 0111-65 MR FROSTY (10) (C) (D) W Jarvis 5 9 11 ... S Sanders 8
4 114-243 SCISSOR RIDGE (14) (CD) J Bridger 5 9 9 ... D Harrison 5
5 55-000- PRINCELY SOUND (136) (CD) M Bell 4 9 0 ... W Ryan 3
6 0-23150 KRYSTAL MAX (10) (CD) J Cullinan 4 9 4 ... Victoria Appleby (7) 2
7 11-4131 APOLLO RED (7) (CD) G L Moore 8 9 1 (7ex) ... Candy Morris 6
8 3003-01 SQUIRE CORRIE (6) D Chapman 5 8 13 (7ex) ... A Culhane 4
– 8 declared –

BETTING: 11-4 Squire Corrie, 9-2 Pageboy, 5-1 Mr Frosty, 6-1 Robo Magic, 13-2 Scissor Ridge, 7-1 Princely Sound, 8-1 Apollo Red, 14-1 Krystal Max

TODAY'S FIXTURES

Football

7.30 unless stated

WORLD CUP GROUP FOUR
Estonia v Scotland (7.0) (at Louis II Stadium, Monaco)

INTERNATIONAL FRIENDLIES
Northern Ireland v Belgium (at Windsor Park, Belfast)
Wales v Republic of Ireland (at Cardiff Arms Park)

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE
SECOND DIVISION
Bournemouth v Preston (7.45)
Peterborough v Wrexham (7.45)
York v Walsall
THIRD DIVISION
Brighton v Exeter (7.45)
Carlisle v Scarborough (7.45)
Fulham v Swansea (7.45)
Hartlepool v Cardiff City
Leyton Orient v Rochdale (7.45)

AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD
SOUTHERN SECTION QUARTER-FINALS
Plymouth v Northampton (7.45)
Watford v Bristol City (7.45)
AUTO WINDSCREENS SHIELD
NORTHERN SECTION QUARTER-FINALS
Bury v Stockport (7.45)
Shrewsbury v Scunthorpe

GM VAUXHALL CONFERENCE
Bath City v Hayes (7.45)
Macclesfield v Hednesford (7.45)
Stalybridge v Southport (7.45)

FA UMBRO TROPHY Second-round replays: Dorchester v Farsley (7.45); Emley v Kidderminster; Gresley v Welling; Woking v St Albans (7.45).

ICIS LEAGUE Premier Division: Dulwich Hamlet v Harrow Borough; Enfield v Bromley; Oxford City v Boreham Wood (7.45). **First Division:** Aldershot v Thame (7.45); Canvey Island v Barton Rovers; Leyton Pennant v Molesey (7.45); Wokingham v Berkhamsted (7.45). **Second Division:** Banstead v Egham (7.45); Barking v Edgware (7.45); Horsham v Ware (7.45). **Third Division:** Aveley v Epsom & Ewell (7.45); Hertford v Northwood.

UNIBOND LEAGUE Premier Division: Lancaster v Barrow. **First Division:** Atherton LR v Curzon Ashton; Warrington v Leigh RMI. **League Cup fourth round:** Accrington Stanley v Radcliffe Borough. **Unifilla First Division Cup second-round replay:** Great Harwood v Netherfield. **President's Cup second-round replay:** Farsley Celtic v Buxton Ltd.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE Premier Division: Baldock v Nuneaton; Burton v Worcester; Cheltenham v Halesowen Town (7.45); Gresley Rovers v King's Lynn (7.45); Hastings v Crawley. **Midland Division:** Tamworth v Grantham. **Southern Division:** Fisher v Erith & Belvedere.

WINSTONLEAD KENT LEAGUE First Division: Slade Green v Corinthian; Whitstable v Deal; Faversham v Thamesmead; Hythe v Herne Bay.

UHLSPORT UNITED COUNTIES LEAGUE Premier Division: Eynesbury v Spalding. **League Cup second round:** Stewarts & Lloyds Corby v Potton. **Third round:** Stamford v Desborough.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE Premier Division: Bridgwater v Odd Down; Chard v Bristol Manor Farm; Mangotsfield v Backwell; Taunton v Yeovil; Westbury v Chippenham.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE Premier Division: Armthorpe v North Ferriby; Liversedge v Hallam; Thackley v Ossett Albion. **President's Cup fourth round:** Brigg v Pontefract; Hucknall v Ossett (7.45).

NORTH WEST COUNTIES LEAGUE First Division: Chadderton v St Helens; Holker Old Boys v Rossendale (7.45); Maine Road v Newcastle Town (7.45). **League Cup third-round replay:** Glossop v Nantwich (7.45).

JEWSON WESSEX LEAGUE: Andover v Whitchurch; Bemerton Heath v Brockenhurst; East Cowes Vics v Petersfield; Wimborne v Thatcham.

JEWSON EASTERN LEAGUE Premier Division (7.45): Fakenham v Wroxham; Gorleston v Diss; Wisbech v Lowestoft.

FEDERATION BREWERY NORTHERN LEAGUE CUP Third round: Durham v Consett.

INTERLINK EXPRESS MIDLAND ALLIANCE: Eastmore St Michaels v Stratford; Bridgnorth v Chasetown; Hinckley Athletic v Rushall Olympic; West Midlands Police v Rocester.

UNIJET SUSSEX COUNTY LEAGUE First Division: Arundel v Oakwood; Burgess Hill v Langney Sports; Hailsham v Peacehaven & Telscombe; Horsham YMCA v Southwick.

LEAGUE OF WALES Gilbert Cup quarter-final second leg: Bangor City (0) v Rhyl (0).

HARP LAGER LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Division: Derry City v University College Dublin.

PONTINS LEAGUE Premier Division: Stoke v Everton (7.0). **League Cup Group Four:** Doncaster v Grimsby (7.0). **Group Five:** Notts County v Derby (7.0).

AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION First Division: Oxford Utd v Ipswich; West Ham v Chelsea (2.0) (at Dagenham & Redbridge).

FA YOUTH CUP Fourth round: Nottingham Forest v Blackburn (7.0); Sunderland v Luton (7.0); Leeds v Queen's Park Rangers (7.0).

Rugby Union

TOUR MATCH: Nelspruit v Pretoria (SA).

WORLD CUP COUNTDOWN: Qualifiers present England and Scotland with contrasting challenges against Italy and Estonia respectively

Zola has mark of distinction

Italy's pocket-sized playmaker is ready to walk tall at Wembley, he tells **Clive White**

Not since Ossie Ardiles brought his wiles to these shores has a foreigner made a bigger impact on the English game – nor been more adored – than Gianfranco Zola. And the latter seems to have managed it in half the time. Now, just as the Falklands War temporarily interrupted the love affair between England and its little Argentinian, so tomorrow's vital World Cup game at Wembley threatens to come between the nation and its diminutive Italian.

Chelsea's artful striker poses England the greatest single threat to their hopes of reaching the finals in France next year. Talk about biting the hand that feeds. Just how Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, chooses to deal with a player he tried to sign himself when manager at Stamford Bridge could well determine the outcome of the game, if not Group Two itself.

To mark or not to mark, that is the question. "It's not a problem for me," Zola claimed. "I handled it many times in Italy. I have played against Gentile, Costacurta, Vierchowod and Ferrara, so there is nothing defenders can do to me in England worse than I've already had. They can man-mark me but there are 10 other players on the pitch."

Zola: 'Intuitive' talent

Yet three of English football's journeymen – Lucas Radebe (Leeds United), Peter Atherton (Sheffield Wednesday) and Des Lyttle (Nottingham Forest) – have each successfully drawn the little man's sting. Indeed Wednesday tried it both ways: for the first 20 minutes, they attempted to deny him space and found themselves two goals down, one of them by Zola. They then put Atherton on him and ended up drawing.

"He's a wonderfully instinctive, intuitive little man," David Pleat, the Wednesday manager, said, "but no player is happy when he's marked despite all this rubbish that [Chelsea manager Ruud] Gullit has come out with to the contrary."

Opinion is pretty much divided on how to deal with Zola and even the Forest coach, Liam O'Kane, thought England would be better off concentrating on their own game. Their man-marking job was hatched between the caretaker manager, Stuart Pearce, and his old Forest and England team-mate, Des Walker, who knew Zola from his Sampdoria days.

It has not had much effect in six-a-sides at Chelsea, though. Dennis Wise was given the task the other day. "He's got happy feet," Wise said. "He jinks one way and then the other and then it's see you, in'it."

Whatever the tactic, Zola's toothy smile must be getting broader by the hour, thinking of Wembley's open spaces. For a player who regards English football as "a paradise for playmakers like myself" the national stadium should be like manna from heaven to him.

And to think at one time Zola feared that at 5ft 5in he might be too small for the English game. The seeds of self-doubt were sown in the Cup-Winners' Cup final in Copenhagen three years ago when, as a Parma player, he came not so much face-to-face with Tony Adams as face-to-belly button. "Adams didn't even have to jump to win the ball," Zola said. "It was a joke." One has a horrible feeling that it might be the Arsenal man who is belittled tomorrow.

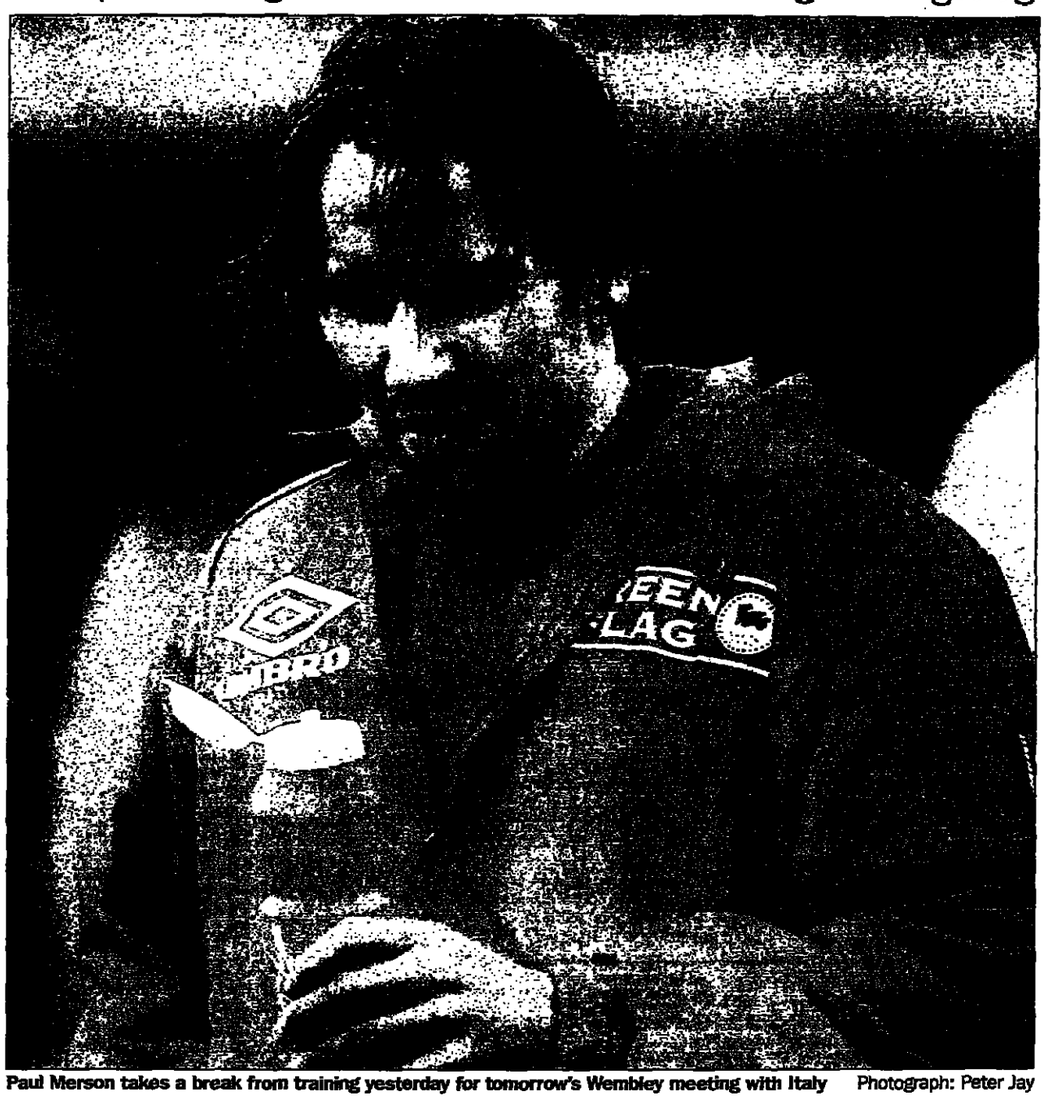
The Sardinian has taken to the English game and the English way of life like a true cosmopolitan, his success following his £4.5m move predicted by fellow countryman Gianluca Vialli with a remark he must have later regretted. "Zola is one of those players who bring strikers good fortune," he said. Certainly Mark Hughes, who looked to be on his way out of Chelsea, would second that. But then if you can hit it off with Faustino Asprilla, as Zola did in his first season at Parma, scoring 29 goals between them, you can play with anyone.

Zola professes to have fallen in love with the game again at Chelsea after falling out with Carlo Ancelotti. The Parma coach insisted on playing him in a wide midfield position, about as daft as Johan Cruyff playing Gary Lineker on the wing at Barcelona.

"It's the most relaxed I've been in my career, and that's important because my football is instinctive," Zola said. "Here I can get away from it and spend time with my family, so that when it comes to matches I'm much more interested in going out and playing."

A favourite of the former Italy coach, Arrigo Sacchi, who picked him ahead of Roberto Baggio for *Euro 96*, Zola is now keeping the richly talented Alessandro Del Piero waiting for a regular place in Cesare Maldini's team. As understudy at Napoli to Diego Maradona (from whom he learned his free-kick cunning) Zola knows what it is like to be kept waiting for that precious No 10 shirt. Now England need to get to grips with it.

Ardiles resolved his own conflicting loyalties to club and country by heading off, temporarily, to France. Let us hope Zola does not follow suit – least-ways not without us.



Paul Merson takes a break from training yesterday for tomorrow's Wembley meeting with Italy Photograph: Peter Jay

Opposites attract Hoddle

Trevor Haylett meets a pair of gifted England players with one goal in common

Seven years and 10 caps separate Paul Merson and David Beckham, but in other ways they are two players sharing the thrill of starting out on the international road.

Part of the healing process for the rehabilitating Merson includes viewing today, and all that life brings to it, as if yesterday never happened.

Should he be chosen for England to face Italy at Wembley in tomorrow's World Cup qualifying tie, it will be like winning that first precious call-up for his country all over again. When he next climbs the winner's rostrum with Arsenal, it will be with the enthusiasm known to those who believe success is something that only comes to others.

Truly, the 28-year-old Merson is a man for today and tomorrow. The dark hours of yesteryear – when drink and drugs and gambling placed his sanity at risk, let alone the remnants of a once flourishing career – have been swept away.

That became clear yesterday when he was asked what he remembered about Gianfranco Zola from Arsenal's Cup-Winners' Cup victory over Parma in 1994. "Not a lot," he replied, "But then I can't remember a lot about any of the two years before my problems were revealed. I have just pushed everything aside and started again.

"All the England caps and medals that I won before I've given to my dad and in my own mind I haven't really won anything yet. Nobody told me this was the right thing to do, it was just something I decided upon.

"There were some good times in the past, but I can't honestly say I enjoyed any of them. It's like that Cup-Winners' Cup final. People say what a great feat it was, but I did not enjoy it like everyone else could."

Merson's versatility enhances England's attacking options as Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, juggles with a number of possible formations while awaiting the final bulletin on who will – and who won't – be available. Merson can play as a wide midfielder or further forward as an auxiliary striker, just behind Alan Shearer. It is from that position that he still demonstrates the shooting prowess that first announced him as another Highbury youngster with international possibilities.

He says he is now enjoying the best football of his career. "The difference between Paul Merson now and the one of two years ago is unbelievable. I have been in the England squad the last two times and it's nice to think there is a chance to play. If I start the game on Wednesday it will be another test for me, but the struggle still goes on. The easiest thing is to get to the mountain top; the hard part is to stay there."

Merson's myriad problems stem from an inability to cope with the fame and the rewards that come with it. With no sign of a brake on football's accelerating popularity, we should be thankful that in Beckham both England and Manchester United appear blessed with a prodigious talent whose temperament will help him cope with most things that come his way.

A fourth international cap for the 21-year-old from Leytonstone looks a certainty amidst all the ifs and buts that surround Hoddle's selection. It is a measure of how far Beckham has come in such a short space of time. At the start of the season he says he was not sure of his place at Old Trafford, but from that first game at Wimbledon – and his memorable goal from half-way – it has been success after success.

"Yes," he says, "if I felt the opportunity was there to try a shot like that on Wednesday I would do it. Of the goals I have scored, that ranks as the best because it was so different from the rest. [United manager] Alex Ferguson and Glenn Hoddle have both been very encouraging and told me not to be afraid to miss."

The incessant questions, the cameras, the hangers-on – nothing seems to faze him. "I really enjoy seeing things about me in the papers. Perhaps it helps that I was once a little kid with an autograph book myself. If you are in the public eye then you have to put up with these things."

Scots aim to make light of Estonia

PHIL SHAW reports from Monte Carlo

Amid the neon-lit opulence of Monte Carlo, which burns up enough power of an evening to illuminate Tallinn for a week, Scotland will tonight seek to make Estonia pay for the dark farce of October by collecting a further three points towards qualification for next year's World Cup finals.

The same Yugoslav referee and Fifa delegate from Luxembourg who were involved in the country's three-second "match" in the Estonian capital reconvened last night to test the floodlights at Monaco's Louis II Stadium.

To no one's surprise, they won the approval of the rival associations, yet Craig Brown will not be viewing his team's Group Four opponents in a new light.

The Scotland manager sat his squad down yesterday in front of a videotape of Estonia's recent friendly against Terry Yorath's Lebanon side. The Lebanese won 2-0, but the screening, together with the report of his "spy" in Beirut, Frank Coulston, confirmed what Brown knew before the original fixture.

"Estonia are still playing the same system, which is designed purely to frustrate," he said. "It's a rigid formation, with no scope for flexibility. I don't agree with playing that way, but they're very well coached [by Teitur Torfasson, an Icelander]. We'll face similar difficulties to those that a team like Coventry had against Woking in the FA Cup."

In fact, Estonia are unlikely to be as positive as the Vauxhall Conference part-timers, which has prompted Brown to study his options even more closely than usual. He may, for instance, decide he does not need three out-and-out defenders if Estonia are going to deploy a solitary striker. If that is the case, there could be roles for Celtic's Jackie McNamara and Tosh McKinlay as wing-backs.

McKinlay is the best crosser in the Scottish game, so it would seem perverse not to use him given that Brown has indicated that Duncan Ferguson is to start for the first time in 26 months.

Andy Goram will also return, in place of the unlucky Jim Leighton, though Brown anticipates a far busier evening for Estonia's former Portsmouth goalkeeper, Mart Poom.

"The Estonians are a fit, athletic team, but where they can't compete with us in technical ability," he said. "That's how we'll win it, not by pumping high balls into the goalmouth where Poom uses his reach to come for everything.

"We've a midfield that any country would envy, so we need to put the emphasis on quick passing. There could be goals in this match for our midfielders."

The central unit will be reinforced by Paul McStay, who admitted yesterday that he had feared his career might be over when surgery on an ankle injury last summer merely worsened the pain. McStay, who wins his 74th cap, will play alongside his former Celtic partner John Collins for the first time since the latter moved to Monaco.

Collins warned that his club's pitch deteriorates every winter, the result of poor drainage and of being built on the third floor of a leisure complex, with car parks and tennis courts below. He sensed that the French were "not particularly interested" in the game, but added: "The motivation for professional players comes from within, but with 2,000 of our supporters there the atmosphere should still be good."

Victory would set the Scots up nicely for their three vital matches before May Day – at home to Estonia and Austria, and away to Sweden – while anything less might so seeds of doubt that could grow ominously as Monaco's spring temperatures finally reach Scotland.

ESTONIA (probable: 4-1-4-1): Poom (Flora Tallinn); Kiss, Hohlov-Simsoo (both Flora); Lemsalu (FSV Mainz 05), Oleak (Lelle SK); Reim; Oper, M Rooba (all Flora), Arbeiter (Lelle SK), Kristal; Zelinski (both Flora)

SCOTLAND (probable 3-4-3): Goram (Rangers); Calderwood (Tottenham), Hendry (Blackburn), McKinlay, McStay (both Celtic), McAllister (Coventry), I Ferguson (Rangers), Collins (Monaco); Gallacher (Blackburn), D Ferguson (Everton), McGinlay (Bolton).

Clock on keepers

Football's world governing body, Fifa, plans to limit the time goalkeepers have to get the ball back into play – but make it legal for them to move on the line before a penalty.

Sepp Blatter, the Fifa general secretary, said yesterday that the governing body would discuss the changes to the rules at a meeting on 1 March.

"I have nothing against goalkeepers, quite the opposite. They have it hard enough. But Fifa wants to stop them getting away with wasting so much time," Blatter said. "Too often you notice a goalkeeper because he is standing still rather than moving.

"He catches the ball, strokes it, holds it tightly, waves at all the other players that they should leave him alone with his private property, lets a few more seconds tick by, looks around a bit more and then he finally gets rid of it," he said.

"In all that, 10 seconds, sometimes 20 seconds, are lost," said Blatter, adding that Fifa was thinking of limiting goalkeepers to five seconds.

Goalkeepers will now, however, be allowed to move on the line before a penalty kick which is at present against the rules but very common, he added.

In Brazil, the defending champions Palmeiras were seething at a female referee who disallowed a goal and sent off one of their players during their 1-1 draw with promoted São Jose in the São Paulo championship at the weekend.

The Canadian Sonia Denoncourt was in charge because the São Paulo federation is now using foreign referees for important matches to avoid accusations that officials are subject to influences or pressure off the field.

Giggs' commitment questioned

GUY HODGSON

The Republic of Ireland are in Cardiff although who is present is not bothering Wales at the moment half as much as who is missing. The principality has got itself into a lather about Ryan Giggs and for the first time the sentiments fall far short of adulation.

A record of no appearances in Wales friendlies has turned a portion of the public into sceptics about the Manchester United winger and the mood is not particularly wholesome. Local papers have questioned his commitment to the country and, according to reports, even his grandparents have appealed to him to turn out soon to spare them from abuse.

Giggs is *the* Welsh player as far as the public is concerned and his absence with a calf strain has overshadowed other no-shows – seven in all. In theory, the friendly with the Irish, who will not name their team until this morning, was to prepare the side for next month's World Cup qualifier against Belgium, instead it has become an experiment Bobby Gould might feel he could have done without if they lose.

To compound the Welsh manager's frustration, the fax from Old Trafford withdrawing Giggs arrived 24 hours late and the story appeared in newspapers before Gould was informed. "If the lad is injured I have to accept that," he said. "I would never challenge a manager if he says a player is not fit. The last thing I want is confrontation."

The Welsh public would be perfectly happy to confront Giggs or, in particular, the United manager, Alex Ferguson, who is seen as the true villain of the piece, but if they doubt the commitment coming from Manchester they are assured about Nottingham. Mark Crossley, the Forest goalkeeper, makes his debut with managerial approval already ringing in his ears.

Crossley, who was born in Barnsley, persuaded Gould to play him by hard labour off the field as much as on it. "The way he has done the work to prove his eligibility for Wales is a quality I haven't seen before," he said.

Karl Ready, the Queen's Park Rangers centre-back, also makes his debut in a side which, with Vinnie Jones, Barry Horne, Mark Hughes and John Hartson, is unlikely to be accused of faint-heartedness. Indeed the prospect of that collection competing against Roy Keane could have blood-sports protesters filling the stands never mind football supporters.

Regrettably the National Stadium will be three-quarters empty which means what could be Paul McGrath's last appearance in an international in Britain will go largely unnoticed. The 37-year-old returns for the Irish, refreshed by a new marriage and a low alcohol intake, and will pit his patched-together body against Hughes. Unfortunately for the Republic's prospects, the Liverpool defender Phil Babb was forced to withdraw from their squad yesterday with a knee injury.

You could call it the ageing matador against the raging bull. Gould posed the question to his squad yesterday whether there is such a thing as a friendly. "Definitely not," one soft voice replied. It belonged to Hughes.

WALES: Crossley (Nottm Forest); Ready (QPR), Speed (Everton), Symons (Man City); Robinson (Charlton), Horne (Birmingham), Jones (Wimbledon), Pembridge (Sheff Wed), Legg (Birmingham); Hartson (Arsenal), Hughes (Chelsea).

Nicholl heads Millwall exodus

CATHERINE RILEY

Jimmy Nicholl, the Millwall manager, and his assistant, Martin Harvey, were yesterday sacked by the Second Division club's administrators.

Twelve players have also been put on the transfer list and the chief executive, Graham Horrop, made redundant. The former Millwall manager John Docherty will take control of team affairs and all staff who are staying on have been asked to take a 10 per cent drop in wages.

Administrators David Buchler and Lee Manning said: "These cuts were always seen as an integral part of the way forward. It is a very painful but necessary process. Both Mr Horrop and Mr Nicholl have been very loyal to the club, but it was our view that changes needed to be made in both areas to stimulate success both on and off the field.

"These changes, together with a planned reduction in the playing squad, will contribute approximately £1.5m a year in savings. As well as concentrating on savings, we are looking at every area of improving the club's income and exploiting its excellent facilities.

"There is a huge amount of hard work still ahead and the financial position is still critical. The club will only survive with the help of the supporters."

Ronnie Whelan is waiting for a referee's report on which his job at Southend could depend. The Roots Hall manager was suspended by the First Division club yesterday and his assistant, Theo Foley, dismissed.

Southend acted after the pair were banished to the stand by the referee during Saturday's defeat by Manchester City. They had been angered by a tackle from Georgi Kinkladze on Phil Gridelet.

Vic Jobson, the Southend chairman, laid the blame for the incident on Foley. He said: "Foley was senior in age and experience and should have restrained Whelan. This is the first time anything like this has happened while I have been involved with the club and I take a very serious view of it. This is certainly not the sort of disciplined leadership the players require in our current situation."

John Toshack ended the most trying period of his long managerial career late on Sunday night when he resigned from Deportivo La Coruña. The Spanish side have been struggling to keep in touch with Real Madrid and Barcelona and problems on the pitch were aggravated when Toshack clashed with club authorities, players and fans.

Meanwhile, Barcelona's embattled coach, Bobby Robson, has been offered money by some of the club's fans to leave the job. One group implored the former England manager to leave, saying: "Please disappear as soon as you can. If you need money, we can give it to you."

THE GREENCARD IS FREE, CAN SAVE YOU £££s AT THE RACES, GIVES YOU FREE BETS PLUS MUCH, MUCH MORE!

DON'T MISS OUT! JOIN TODAY FREE ONLY IN

The Sporting Life

هكذا من الأصل

صكذا من الاجل

As the professional game is pretty violent already I think the advantages of legalised padding outweigh the disadvantages

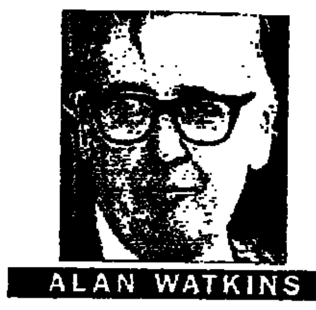
I am hoping for at least one upset in the Five Nations' Championship matches to be played on Saturday. If France beat Wales, and England beat Ireland, the vista will be what we have looked over so often in the past few years: a competition between France and England, to be decided by the England v France match, which will take place this year at Twickenham.

Of next Saturday's pair, it is the Dublin game that looks more likely to produce the surprise. Of the last 10 encounters there, both countries have won five apiece, Ireland last winning in 1993. Judged by their performance against Wales, they are perfectly capable of winning, though I do not think I shall risk much money unless the odds are favourable.

As my column last week was chiefly about the deficiencies of Antipodean referees, I did not have space to pay adequate tribute to their play in Cardiff. Jim Staples had a tremendous match. In one passage of play he showed that he was as fast as, maybe slightly faster than, Ieuan Evans. On present form, he certainly deserves to go to South Africa with the Lions, though I should still prefer Neil Jenkins as first choice for his goal-kicking.

How many people, I wonder, noticed that Jenkins made a hash of catching the ball on his own line, so presenting Jonathan Bell with his first-half try, because of the padding on the posts? I am all in favour of protecting players against injury, particularly in these new, harsher times. But the padding on the Cardiff posts was rectangular and stuck out on each side of them. What is needed, surely, is padding that follows the circular contour of the post instead of being at variance with it.

As we are on the subject of padding, what about padding for players? As I understand the laws, protective clothing for chest, back and shoulder is still not allowed in rugby union, though in league it is. Yet in the Richmond v Moseley match last Saturday a Moseley player removed his jersey for one reason or another to reveal what looked like a bullet-proof jacket, which may have been a necessary addition for someone playing against the Quinnell brothers.



ALAN WATKINS

Three years ago, when South Africa were playing in Wales, I noticed François Pienaar emerging jerseyless from the dressing-room wearing copious quantities of padding round his shoulders. Most of his colleagues looked as if they were similarly protected. Obviously, on the hard grounds in South Africa you need some extra covering, even though the laws of rugby union football are the same the world over.

My view is that, if players want this kind of protection, they should be allowed to have it. The laws should be amended accordingly. The contrary argument is that, the more protection that is allowed, the more violent the game will become. But as the professional game is pretty violent already – it can only be a matter of time before someone is killed – I think the advantages of legalised padding outweigh the disadvantages, though it may well be that our players will come more and more to resemble American footballers.

Playing for Richmond in the match I have briefly referred to was last year's Irish full-back, Simon Mason, then of Orrell. He was probably the best full-back in the British Isles, judged by form rather than by reputation. Yet today he is in Irish estimation not only behind Staples but behind Conor O'Shea as well. Rugby is a capricious sport.

Eric Elwood would probably agree with that. When he first appeared in international rugby four years ago, he seemed an outside-half in the Irish mould, not as exciting as Tony Ward and Sam Campbell, perhaps, but a worthy successor nevertheless, not least in his goal-kicking abilities. The Irish selectors, having discovered yet another good outside-half, then proceeded to mess him about, dropping him, restoring him and then dropping him again for no very apparent reason. He certainly did all that was required of him against Wales.

Other players – notably the Irish back five – did considerably more. Seven of their forwards now play for Courage League clubs. In the past, there have been troubles, notably with London Irish, over players who are required both for provincial matches in Ireland and for training sessions there. I suggested that, as a compromise, these sessions should be held at Stansted Airport. Now even this seems to be unnecessary. They could be held instead at the London Irish's ground at Sunbury-on-Thames, which would presumably suit the new Irish coach, Brian Ashton, better than the present arrangements.

Henman humbled by Sinner

Tennis

JOHN ROBERTS reports from Dubai

Accustomed as we had become to reporting about Britons ranked around No 180 losing first-round matches against opponents in the top 20, it came as something of a shock last night that an opponent ranked No 183 had defeated Oxford's world No 17, Tim Henman.

Such is the measure of Henman's impact recently that his fall to a German qualifier, Martin Sinner, 7-6, 6-4, in the Dubai Open disappointed the majority of the spectators.

It was the manner of the defeat that irritated Henman and observers who have charted his rise to prominence. "It's no good creating chances if you don't take them," he said, adding, "He had one chance – a double-fault – and that was the crux."

The British No 1 failed to convert any of seven break points in the opening set, several of which were donated to him by Sinner's unforced errors – including two double-faults at 5-5. Although the German did not have a single break point in the set, he clinched the tie-break by two mini-breaks to one, 7-5.

Henman's double-faults subsequently presented Sinner with the first break of the match, for 2-1 in the second set. And even though Henman managed to break back in the next game, the success was chiefly due to his opponent, who could hardly have directed a high forehand volley over the baseline with greater awkwardness if he had been using a frying pan.

A bizarre sequence of shots, culminating with a winning smash after a net cord and a deflection off a net post – brought Sinner three break points in the ninth game. Henman saved one with a serve and volley, only for Sinner to attack a second serve with an impressive backhand pass.

Henman's backhand had been so unreliable for the majority of the 92 minutes of the match that there was a certain irony about the perfection of his shot which saved the first match point. Sinner did not hesitate over the second opportunity, passing Henman with a backhand across the court.

It was Henman's first match for three weeks, since a splendid start to the year as a finalist in Qatar, a victory in Sydney and an appearance in the third round of the Australian Open, in which he was defeated by Michael Chang, the No 2 seed.

"It's disappointing to lose in the first round, but it happens to a lot of players," Henman said. "Just because I've lost one match I don't think I need to change the direction in which I'm moving."

Sinner, 29 last Friday, had his career disrupted by torn ligaments in his left ankle, caused by playing football in 1989. The injury required three operations, the last in March 1993.

Henman had won their two previous matches in straight sets, on the grass at London's Queen's Club in 1995 and on an indoor carpet in Copenhagen last year. "Having talked about my performance tonight," Henman said, "I think Martin did very well and deserves a lot of credit."

This afternoon Henman is due to play doubles in partnership with Pat Cash, the 1987 Wimbledon champion, and intends to make the most of the special atmosphere here.

Things have never been quite the same in this part of the world since Peter O'Toole played Lawrence of Arabia. The novelty this year is an Irish village, complete with a replica of Ballinasloe Post Office and a cartload of Guinness barrels, which has materialised on the west side of Dubai Tennis Stadium.

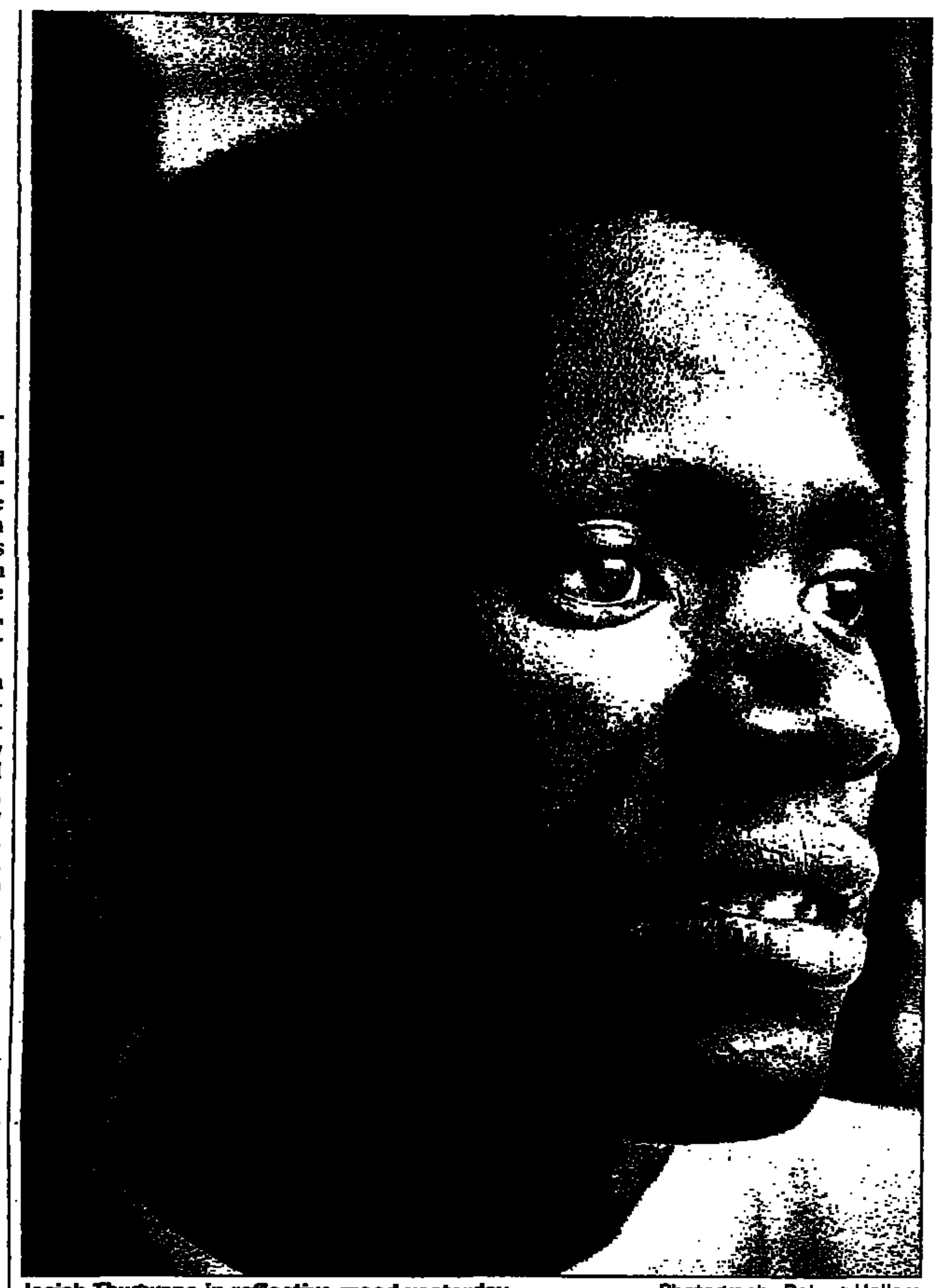
Far from a mirage, the reproduction of a little piece of Ireland serves to emphasise a strong connection between the Emerald Isle and the Dubai Open, specifically with the tournament's promoters, Dubai Duty Free.

Inspired by the success of the duty free operation at Shannon Airport, the director general of the Dubai Department of Civil Aviation, Mohi-din Benhindi, sought the advice of the Irish Government. He was invited to Shannon and subsequently recruited staff to set up shop in the Emirates, people such as Colm McLoughlin, who "came for five months and have been here for 14 years".

TODAY'S NUMBER

800

The number of new badminton clubs to be established in South Africa's townships as part of a 2m rand (£300,000) initiative by Denmark. "It's the greatest thing that's ever happened to us," an official from the South African Badminton Union said.



Josiah Thugwane in reflective mood yesterday Photograph: Robert Hallam

Fear and running in South Africa

Mike Rowbottom on a perilous path for two men in the London Marathon

Having signed up Josiah Thugwane, the Olympic champion, for this year's London Marathon, the event organisers took the opportunity to show him round the capital yesterday.

First, he had a run on Hampstead Heath; then a press appearance at South Africa House; and finally a dental appointment to sort out the teeth which were brutally rearranged in a road rage incident near Johannesburg 12 days ago.

The diminutive 25-year-old, who earned a place in history as the first black South African to win Olympic gold, is pursuing his running career in terrifying circumstances.

After his surprise victory in Atlanta last August, he explained that the noticeable scar on his chin was from a bullet wound suffered five months earlier, when he had had a gun pulled on him after giving a lift to two men in a truck used to transport supplies to the township bar he runs.

The bullet shattered the windscreen after glancing his face, and Thugwane subsequently jumped from the moving vehicle, sustaining back injuries which affected his Olympic preparations.

He ran in Atlanta despite death threats against his family (he has a wife and four daughters). The day after his victory, the coal-mining company for whom Thugwane still works as a cleaner helped him relocate from the corrugated iron shack he had built himself in the township of Mzinoni, to the middle-class Johannesburg suburb of Middelburg.

However, it was while he was returning there after a training session on January that he says he was forced off the road by three men in a car, beaten and shot at. "When I tried to run away the people in the car followed me," he says. "One of them shot at me. He wanted to injure my legs."

The 5ft 2in and seven stone runner was only saved when another car appeared and his assailants fled. He now trains 85 kilometres away from his home. "This is where I can focus my mind," he said. "Of course it is sad. But there is nothing I can do. This is my country."

Thugwane, who earned $50,000 (£32,000) from appearing in the Fukuoaka marathon in December and will get around twice that to run in London, is determined not to be demoralised. "I will run until I cannot run anymore. It is not only in South Africa that you can find such problems, you can meet them all over the world. If that's what I have to face, I will face it."

Thugwane's training partner, Lawrence Peu, who will also run in London on 13 April, pleaded yesterday for the South African athletics federation to help secure the safety of Thugwane and other runners achieving commercial success in South Africa.

"The mechanics have to be there to protect this guy," Peu said. "The nation needs him. If he has to hide himself, we are never going to get happiness.

"We cannot carry on like this, otherwise it is demoralising for the young of South Africa. They are going to be scared. They will think: 'what's the use? You are going to perform but you will get killed'."

Peu, who sets off with Thugwane today for a training break in Colorado Springs, had his own brush with death recently. Last summer, after failing to get one of the three South African places in the Olympic marathon following training in the US, he made plans to race instead in Paris. He was booked on the TWA flight 800 which subsequently exploded over Long Island; but Peu was not aboard. He had cancelled his ticket after a last-minute change of heart in order to return home.

After watching reports of the disaster on television, Peu – who subsequently finished 27th in the Olympic marathon after being called up as a reserve – knelt down and prayed. "I had to accept it," he said. "It was in the hands of God."

Do not expect any bleating from these two men if things do not go to plan in London. They will both know they are lucky to be there.

Robarts robs Cambridge of winning run

Hockey

BILL COLWILL

Two second-half strikes from Tony Robarts, the Bishop's Stortford penalty corner expert, robbed Cambridge City the Adnams Premier leaders, of their 100 per cent record in a 2-2 draw after Gareth Machin and Julian Archer had given City a 2-0 interval lead.

In the North, the leaders Norton, who dropped their first points of the season last weekend, dropped two more in a goalless draw away to Swalwell but with a game in hand lead Formby by six points. In the South, where two teams go through to the National League play-offs from the Nastro Azzurro Premier, Anchorians plus Hampstead and Westminster march on.

Second-placed Hampstead won 2-0 against Old Whitgiftians, while the leaders Anchorians had a comfortable 4-2 victory at Richmond.

Goulding summoned

Rugby League

DAVE HADFIELD

The Silk Cut Challenge Cup-holders, St Helens, who leapt the biggest hurdle in the way of their retention of the trophy by beating Wigan at the weekend, have been drawn to meet either Huddersfield or Hull in the fifth round.

The two First Division sides, who drew at Huddersfield on Sunday, replay their tie at The Boulevard on Thursday, to avoid a clash with England's football match against Italy.

Saints will again be at home against the winners, but could be without their captain, Bobbie Goulding, for the rest of their Cup run. He will appear before the League's disciplinary committee on Thursday after being sent off for a high tackle on Wigan's Neil Cowie on Saturday. Even the average tariff of a two-match suspension would rule him out until the semi-finals.

The League's executive committee will today study a video recording of the brawl that followed Goulding's tackle, in order to decide whether action should be taken against anyone else.

It is a significant week for Goulding in another way. Saints' directors are to discuss his transfer request today.

Wigan have denied that there have been any developments in Va'aiga Tuigamala's projected departure to Newcastle. Their board, however, is to discuss the £750,000 offer for the player and Newcastle are hoping to make an announcement tomorrow.

The outstanding Cup-tie in the fifth round takes last season's beaten finalist, Bradford Bulls, back to the capital to play London Broncos.

There are other intriguing ties at Salford, where Paris St-Germain are the visitors, and at Warrington, who take on Sheffield Eagles.

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP Fifth-round draw: Carlisle v Featherstone; Salford v Paris; St Helens v Huddersfield or Hull; Halifax v Keighley; Wakefield v Oldham; Leeds v Dewsbury; London v Bradford; Warrington v Sheffield. *(Ties to be played 22 or 23 February).*

SILK CUT PLATE First-round draw: Hunslet v Huddersfield or Hull; Lancashire Lynx v Barrow; Hull KR v Doncaster; Bramley v Rochdale; Leigh v Swinton; Widnes v York; Workington v Dudley Hill; Whitehaven v Batley. *(Ties to be played 15 or 16 February).*

The Steelers keep pace with Cardiff

Ice hockey

STEVE PINDER

With just two weeks of the regular season left, only Sheffield Steelers can stop Cardiff Devils from lifting the inaugural Superleague title.

The Welsh side are four points clear but Steelers have two games in hand (one of which, against Ayr Scottish Eagles, was played last night).

Cardiff could have a more comfortable cushion had they not dropped two points at Nottingham Panthers, only their eighth defeat in 36 games. Nottingham, however, were brought back to earth the next day against Manchester Storm, who overcame a two-goal deficit to win 4-2.

There were no such difficulties for Devils, who easily beat Basingstoke Bison 6-2, while Steelers kept up the pace with similar ease, beating Newcastle 4-2.

Gomarsall confident

Rugby Union

Andy Gomarsall, the England scrum-half, is confident of being fit for England's Five Nations' Championship match in Ireland on Saturday despite suffering two injuries during Wasps' Courage League win at the weekend.

"The nerves in my shoulder went again, as they did against Scotland the previous week, and my ankle was stood on," Gomarsall said. "But I know the shoulder can be treated and tons of ice are being applied to my ankle." He will be expected to prove his fitness by tomorrow at the latest. If either of his joints lets him down, it would mean a first cap for Austin Healey, the Leicester scrum-half.

Meanwhile Ireland's training session at the University of Limerick yesterday had several players missing with injuries. David Corkery, the open-side flanker, has a broken finger and has been told not to get involved in any contact work.

A decision on the centre Jonathan Bell, who damaged a rib cartilage playing for Northampton, would not be made until Thursday. Other injury concerns were the loose-head prop Nick Popplewell (hamstring), as well as the Ireland A scrum-half Steve McIvor (hamstring) and flanker Eddie Halvey (ankle). The Ireland A lock Mick Galwey was absent for an examination on a back injury.

The French squad assembled in Paris yesterday to begin preparations for their encounter with Wales at the Parc de Princes and Jean-Claude Skrela, the coach, will be monitoring the progress of the giant lock Olivier Merle, who is suffering from a rib injury.

Having already lost the flanker Philippe Benneton, the outside-half Alain Penaud and centre Thomas Castaignède through injury and the prop Franck Tournaire because of suspension, Skrela is anxious not to be without the powerful Merle.

■ Carwyn Davies, the former Welsh international, was found dead in his car at his home in the village of Llangadog, Dyfed.

SPORTING DIGEST

Athletics

Merlene Ottey, the Jamaican sprinter who has won an unrivalled 34 major championship medals, will run the 60 metres at the Bupa indoor grand prix in Birmingham on 23 February.

Basketball

NBA ALL-STAR GAME: East 132 West 120 *(East lead series 30-17).*

SUNDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Budweiser League: Thames Valley 95 Newcastle 82; London Towers 76 Chester 75.

BUDWEISER LEAGUE

	P	W	L	F	A	Pts
London	21	17	4	1853	1642	34
Sheffield	22	17	5	1964	1695	34
Chester	23	16	7	1967	1843	32
Birmingham	22	15	7	1901	1790	30
Leopards	22	15	7	2039	1934	30
Manchester	23	13	10	1782	1726	26
Newcastle	23	13	10	2056	2013	26
Derby	24	11	13	2097	2109	22
Leicester	21	11	10	1765	1735	22
Thames Valley	22	7	15	2018	2051	14
Worthing	24	7	17	1998	2176	14
Crystal Palace	23	4	19	1722	1939	8
Hemel/Watford	24	1	23	2008	2541	2

Cricket

The South African captain, Hansie Cronje, is to captain Ireland in this year's Benson and Hedges Cup.

SUPERSPORT SERIES (Four-day matches): Kimberley (final day): Northern Transvaal 363 (A J Seymore 132, M van Jaarsveld 109; G A Roe 4-74) and 185; Griqualand West 541 for 6 dec (P H Barnard 212, W M Dry 74, B N Benkenstein 62no) and 10 for 0. Griqualand West won by 10 wickets. Johannesburg (third day): Transvaal 371 and 263 for 8 (K R Rutherford 126no); Western Province 227 and 59 for 2.

RED STRIPE CUP (Third day of four): St George's, Grenada: Barbados 161 and 167. Windward Islands 188. St John's, Antigua: Leeward Islands 352, Trinidad and Tobago 26 for 2.

Football

David Kipiani has replaced his former Dynamo Tbilisi team-mate Alexander Chivadze as coach of Georgia, following Chivadze's resignation yesterday. Kipiani will continue to coach Dynamo Tbilisi.

NATIONWIDE FOOTBALL LEAGUE Re-arranged fixtures: Tue 25 Feb: Southend v Norwich *(from 11 Jan).* Wed 26 Feb: Swindon v Birmingham *(from 15 Feb).* Tue 4 Mar: Peterborough v Watford *(from 4 Feb);* Brighton v Northampton *(from 11 Jan).* Wed 5 Mar: West Bromwich v Southend *(from 4 Mar).* Tue 18 Mar: Preston v Wrexham *(from 1 Jan);* Walsall v Blackpool *(from 4 Feb).* Tue 8 Apr: Cambridge Utd v Northampton *(from 5 Feb);* Barnet v Scunthorpe *(from 11 Feb).* Tue 15 April: Stockport v Watford *(from 28 Dec);* Wycombe v Burnley *(from 4 Feb).*

FA UMBRO TROPHY third-round draw: Colwyn Bay v St Leonard's Stamcroft; Ashton Utd v Bromsgrove Rovers or Hyde; Stevenage Borough v Welling or Guiseley; Gloucester v Runcorn; Salisbury or Dorchester v St Albans or Woking; Altrincham v Bishop Auckland; Morecambe v Dagenham & Redbridge; Heybridge Swifts v Kidderminster Harriers or Emley. *(Ties to be played Saturday 1 March).*

ENGLAND UNDER-18 SQUAD (Friendly v Scotland, Gigg Lane, Bury, Tuesday 18 February): Weaver (Leyton Orient), Simonsen (Tranmere), Ferdinand (West Ham), Curtis (Manchester Utd), Clement (Chelsea), Ball (Everton), O'Brien (Bradford City), Perry (Queen's Park Rangers), Bowyer (Tottenham), Dyer (Ipswich), Morris (Chelsea), Nicholls (Charlton), Platts (Sheffield Wednesday), Forbes (Norwich), Owen (Liverpool), Bridges (Sunderland), Noel-Williams (Watford), Lisbie (Charlton). Stand-by players: Heritage (Sheffield Utd), Stewart (Blackburn), Crowe (Arsenal), Griffin (Stoke), Haslam (Sheffield Wednesday), Brown (Manchester Utd), Williams (Mansfield), Brightwell (Manchester Utd), Wright (Leeds), Melton (Nottingham Forest), Staton (Blackburn), Campbell (Middlesbrough), Wilson (Manchester Utd), Wood (Manchester Utd), Davies (Sheffield Utd), Burn (Tottenham).

SUNDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Spanish League: Espanyol 2 (Raducioiu pens 14, 50) Barcelona 0; Tenerife 2 (Jokanovic pen 74, Llorente 78) Logroñés 0; Atlético Madrid 4 (Caminero, Bejbl 38, Esnaider 65, pen 68) Compostela 1 (M Garcia 29); Real Zaragoza 2 (Higuera 26, K Gonzalez 80) Sevilla 1 (Ramis 56); Santander 2 (Beschastnykh 14, Tome 83) Sporting Gijon 0; Oviedo 1 (Maqueda 60) Valladolid 1 (Soto 18); Rayo Vallecano 1 (Moreau 16) Athletic Bilbao 1 (Urzaiz 71); Real Betis 3 (Alfonso 67, George 72, Pier 83) Extremadura 1 (Duré 81); Hercules 2 (Alfaro 6, Mijatovic 34); Real Madrid 3 (Mijatovic 12, Seedorf 19, Raul 54); Deportivo La Coruña 2 (Rosaldo 40, Renaldo 55) Celta Vigo 2 (Sanchez 20, Mostovoi 64).

Golf

BUICK INVITATIONAL (La Jolla, Calif) Leading final-round scores (US unless stated): 275 M O'Meara 67 68 71 71. 277 D Ogrin 67 71 70 69; D Waldorf 70 68 72 69; D Hammond 73 67 68 69; L Janzen 71 65 71 70; J Parnevik (Swe) 70 66 69 72; M Hulbert 68 69 67 73, C Stadler 67 68 70 72. 278 S Kendall 67 71 71 69; S Lowery 67 66 75 70. 279 K Gibson 70 68 72 69, B Tway 64 72 71 72; M Bradley 71 63 72 73; B Andrade 69 70 67 73; J D Blake 65 71 66 77. 280 S Simpson 69 68 71 72; T Herron 68 70 69 73. 281 T Byrum 70 69 73 69; J Johnston 73 67 72 69, R Fehr 72 66 73 70; S Lyle (GB) 71 68 72 70; J P Hayes 72 70 68 71; D Duval 69 69 72 71; T Smith 65 75 69 72. Selected: 286 H Clark (GB) 69 72 73 72.

SOUTH AFRICAN OPEN (Johannesburg) Leading final-round scores (SA unless stated): 201 V Singh (Fiji) 69 66 66. 203 N Price (Zim) 72 66 65. 205 E Els 66 72 67, 206 M McNulty (Zim) 69 69 68. 208 D Gilford (Eng) 69 66 73; F Allem 66 71 71. 209 E Darcy (Irl) 67 69 73; A Hunter (Sco) 71 68 70. 210 *H Otto 74 68 68; I Woosnam (Wal) 66 75 69; J van de Velde (Fr) 68 69 73; T Bjorn (Den) 66 69 75; W Bradley 65 70 75. * denotes amateur

WORLD RANKINGS: 1 G Norman (Aus) 11.70pts ave; 2 T Lehman (US) 9.82; 3 C Montgomerie (Sco) 8.95; 4 E Els (SA) 8.95; 5 M O'Meara (US) 8.84; 6 N Faldo (Eng) 7.98; 7 F Couples (US) 7.77; 8 M Ozaki (Japan) 7.58; 9 D Love III (US) 6.85, 10 C Pavin (US) 6.80; 11 P Mickelson (US) 6.45; 12 N Price (Zim) 6.43; 13 S Stricker (US) 6.17; 14 T Woods (US) 5.72; 15 S Elkington (Aus) 5.70; 16 S Hoch (US) 5.69; 17 D Duval (US) 5.50; 18 B Langer (Ger) 5.49; 19 S Jones (US) 5.37; 20 T Watson (US) 5.35.

Ice hockey

NHL: Buffalo 2 Ottawa 1; Calgary 6 Anaheim 1; Dallas 2 Los Angeles 1 (ot); Edmonton 4 Washington 1; Florida 4 NY Rangers 3.

SUPERLEAGUE (Sunday): Ayr 7 Bracknell 6; Cardiff 6 Basingstoke 2; Manchester 4 Nottingham 2; Newcastle 2 Sheffield 4.

SUPERLEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	OL	Pts
Cardiff	37	26	3	8	0	55
Sheffield	36	23	3	10	2	51
Ayr	36	17	6	13	0	40
Newcastle	36	16	2	18	5	39
Nottingham	38	18	1	19	2	39
Manchester	36	12	2	22	1	27
Basingstoke	38	11	3	24	2	27
Bracknell	35	12	2	21	0	26

** OL column indicates games lost in overtime. Teams are awarded one point for each loss.*

PREMIER LEAGUE (Saturday): Kingston 14 Medway 2; Slough 12 Peterborough 1; Swindon 9 Solihull 4; Telford 4 Guildford 6. (Sunday): Guildford 4 Swindon 3; Kingston 5 Telford 0; Medway 2 Slough 10; Peterborough 1 Solihull 21.

Rugby League

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP *Fixture change:* **Fourth-round replay:** Thu 13 Feb: Hull v Huddersfield *(from 12 Feb).*

Rugby Union

SCOTLAND UNDER 19 SQUAD (FIRA tournament, Argentina, March): J White (Watsonians, capt), C Black (Edinburgh Academicals), H Boyd (Boroughmuir), T Boyd (Glasgow Southern), C Capaldi (Stewart's-Melville FP), R Chrystie (Hawick Linden), K Davidson (Langholm), A Dickson (Selkirk), M Di Rollo (Watsonians), R Heddow (Harrogate), G Hoyle (Aberdeen GSFP), G Howieson (Glasgow Southern), A Jacobsen (Preston Lodge), S Linden (Gordonstoun), G McCormick (London Scottish), A Milne (Macclesfield), A Mitchell (Mackie Academy FP), C Paterson (Gala), J Patton (Blackheath), S Pearman (Gloucester), J Philip (London Scottish), G Ross (Heriot's FP), C Smith (Berwick), T Stephens (Stewart's-Melville FP), S Taylor (Stirling County), S Walker (Heriot's FP).

Skiing

Marc Girardelli, five times the World Cup champion and the winner of more Alpine skiing medals than any other man, has confirmed his retirement. The Austrian-born all-rounder, who represented Luxembourg, has been told by medical advisers that he could spend the rest of his life on crutches unless he stopped racing.

Snooker

BENSON AND HEDGES MASTERS (Wembley, Sunday) Final: S Davis (Eng) bt R O'Sullivan (Eng) 10-8.

Tennis

DUBAI OPEN Men's singles, first round: M Sinner (Ger) bt T Henman (GB) 7-6 6-4; H Gumy (Arg) bt J Sekulov (Aus) 6-4 6-3.

ATP LEADING MEN'S RANKINGS: 1 P Sampras (US) 5,774 pts; 2 G Ivanisevic (Cro) 3,572; 3 T Muster (Aut) 3,492; 4 M Chang (US) 3,417; 5 Y Kafelnikov (Rus) 3,367; 17 T Henman (GB) 1,540.

ATP LEADING MONEY WINNERS: 1 P Sampras (US) $457,178; 2 C Moya (Sp) $253,889; 3 T Woodbridge (Aus) $67,668; 4 G Ivanisevic (Croa) $143,145; 5 T Muster (Aut) $131,254; 6 M Woodforde (Aus) $127,668; 7 T Henman (GB) $117,182.

WTA LEADING WOMEN'S RANKINGS: 1 S Graf (Ger) 5028.0000pts; 2 M Hingis (Swit) 3995.5000; 3 A Sanchez Vicario (Sp) 3202.6871; 4 J Novotna (Cz Rep) 3183.9412; 5 C Martinez (Sp) 3010.6710.

WTA LEADING MONEY WINNERS: 1 M Hingis (Swit) $737,740; 2 M Pierce (Fr) $221,129; 3 N Zvereva (Bela) $140,807; 4 L Davenport (US) $133,516; 5 A Coetzer (SA) $128,798.

SUNDAY'S LATE RESULTS: Davis Cup World Group first round (Ribeirão Preto, Br): United States bt Brazil 4-1; **(Bucharest):** Netherlands bt Romania 3-2.

SNOW REPORT - in association with Thomas Cook Ski Direct

SKI HOTLINE

Latest snow and weather reports from 180+ resorts in Europe and North America. Phone or fax:

0891 333 110

SKI SNAPSHOT

At-a-glance fax guide to snow conditions at 180+ resorts worldwide:

0897 500 601

SKIFAX

Where to find the best snow - by fax. Call SKIFAX - the ski facts:

0897 300 301

SKICODES

For a fax list of 180+ resort codes:

0990 100 843

Calls to 0891 service cost 50p/min Daytime Rate, 45p/min

AROUND THE RESORTS

Resort	Comment	Area open	Last snow	Lwr cm	Upp cm	Forecast
ANDORRA						
Arinsal	Firm-pisted base	95%	3.2	90	150	Sunshine
Grau Roig	Best on upper runs	100%	3.2	145	200	Changeable
AUSTRIA						
Kaprun	Powdery on Kitzsteinhorn	90%	5.2	5	40	Sunny, clear
St Anton	Powdery on Rendl/Galzig	95%	5.2	50	100	Sunny, clear
BULGARIA						
Borovets	Very poor, little snow left	15%	1.2	0	25	Mainly sunny
CANADA						
Tremblant	Dry powdery snow	100%	6.2	40	60	Mainly sunny
Whistler	Mainly machine groomed	85%	7.2	255	255	Cloud sun
FRANCE						
Avoriaz	Firm pisted base	100%	5.2	150	170	Snow flurries
Montgenèvre	Les Chalvettes looking good	100%	22.1	180	220	Sunshine
Val Thorens	Cold, dry snow up top	100%	5.2	110	210	Changeable
ITALY						
Bardonecchia	Good on Jafferau	100%	21.1	130	300	Mostly fair
Bormio	Best Bormio 2000	100%	21.1	30	200	Clear sunny
Madesimo	Valle di Lei looking good	100%	21.1	90	390	Sunshine
SWITZERLAND						
Saas Fee	Mittelallalin, lots of powder	98%	5.2	65	155	Bright sunny
St Moritz	Crisp, dry snow cover	100%	5.2	85	180	Mostly fine
UNITED STATES						
Killington	Good, groomed conditions	95%	8.2	80	190	Cloudy
Loon	Mainly packed or groomed	70%	6.2	40	125	Part cloudy
Mammoth	Powdery snow at all levels	100%	4.2	330	450	Clear, calm

SKI DIRECT

Call Ski Direct on 01733 33 55 14

Mon - Fri 9am - 7pm Sat 9am - 5pm

Thomas Cook DIRECT

Running into danger
The Olympic champion who dodges bullets in South Africa, page 27

sport

Starting over
Paul Merson hopes for an England relaunch against Italy, page 26

SECOND TEST: England's trouncing of New Zealand by an innings and 68 runs takes embattled tourists into welcome territory

Victory has Atherton jumping for joy

DEREK PRINGLE

reports from the Basin Reserve, Wellington
New Zealand 124 & 191
England 383
England win by innings and 68 runs

If a computer had simulated it, the result of the second Test here would surely have been a stalemate: while the current height of New Zealand's ambition is to play for the draw, England are not used to winning away from home, as they showed in the first Test in Auckland. Instead, with England's bowlers in rare mood, New Zealand were trounced yesterday by an innings and 68 runs as the touring team played their most intense cricket of the tour.

That is a drubbing in anyone's language, and it puts England into overseas territory (i.e. one up in the series) they have not explored since they were last here, five years ago.

Gratifyingly, from the England management's point of view, it is also a situation that has at last given the England captain something substantial with which to thump his tub. And in his most impressive performance in front of the media this winter, Mike Atherton admitted feeling somewhat relieved that England had finally managed to convert supremacy into victory.

"We've got so close this winter a couple of times," he said, his hair matted with the usual alcoholic accoutrements of victory. "It was nice to finally finish it off. I'm very pleased for the players. We've worked hard generally over the longer form of the game and played some good cricket this winter. They deserve to get a victory."

At one stage, as persistent morning drizzle threatened to hold up play, it again looked nip and tuck as to whether England would get the win they had worked for. However, once it had lifted and England were able to take the second new ball, the result became a formality that even England's win-shy cricketers could not avoid.

"It was a different surface to the one in Auckland, which was a dead pitch," Atherton said. "There a tailender could hang around. But there was no way, given a new ball and bowlers bowling well, that tailenders were going to hang around."

It was, in hindsight, a good toss to lose, and Atherton might have said a quiet thank you to his opposite number, Lee Germon, for winning the toss and batting. The England captain would have made the same decision had the first day offered more than the two hours' play that were eventually possible after rain had delayed the start. At 56-6, on the first evening, New Zealand were essentially out of the match after just two hours' play.

There was another difference too, and it came in the lanky form of Andrew Caddick, a consistently menacing presence whose swing and bounce helped overcome the current lassitude of Dominic Cork, who was curiously out of sorts.

Gough, who gamely took on a strongish wind on the last day, may have ended with the best haul – his 9 for 92 was his best Test match return – but Caddick got more than anyone out of this engaging pitch, which, as Atherton pointed out, had something in it for everyone.

Euphoria can be a great disguise, and while the England coach, David Lloyd, is pondering the ease with which he has gone from being Basil Fawlty to Jim'll Fix It, there is still the unanswered question as to why this was Caddick's first Test of the winter. Indeed, he would probably not have played here had Chris Silverwood not been freakishly injured in practice two days before the start.

There is a theory that Caddick lacks the necessary mettle when the going gets tough. As this is virtually all the time where England are concerned, his absence – if that theory is correct – is perhaps understandable. However, it is hard to recall when he last let England down in a Test match.

For all Caddick's niggling faults, he is a talented bowler who can win matches and he was probably the decisive factor in a cohesive team effort. In any case, playing him can only be a positive measure and one that has the added benefit of allowing Gough to attack without compromise. It was Gough who got England going yesterday, taking four wickets in 21 balls before lunch, although it was fitting that Caddick took the last two wickets to secure victory.

But where exactly, with the Ashes series ahead this summer, does this rare Test win leave England in terms of world ratings? Although there was a time when beating the tenacious Kiwis at home was a hard-earned achievement – rather than something all but handed over on a plate thanks to the New Zealanders' limp and hair-brained batting – England's win, however welcome, was not the stuff of legends. That will come later, on a turning pitch, when Daniel Vettori has graduated from teenage Kiwi prodigy to prodigious spinner and midnight curfews are necessary only for schoolgirls in convents.

Yet there is a good feel and shape to this England team. For one thing, the bowling seemed balanced, and if Cork's arm and form were both below their best, Robert Croft and Phil Tufnell trussed up those that escaped the clutches of Gough and Caddick.

It is a performance for which Ian Botham, England's part-time bowling coach, can take only the most slender of credits, unless he has been issuing instructions at the end of his mobile phone on Lake Taupo.

Nevertheless, it is a combination that is only possible while Alec Stewart is able to stay free of injury and keep wicket. At present, Stewart is managing to do both, as well as score runs, but it is a precarious position from which to have everything else flow.

Making big runs is a habit his Surrey colleague, Graham Thorpe, also appears to have taken up now that he has regained his confidence and got his weight distributed properly between front and back foot. Thorpe scored his second century of the series at the Basin Reserve, an achievement that saw another nuggety left-hander, Martin Donnelly, make him the man of the match.

In contrast Nick Knight is suffering a minor crisis in confidence and, but for the absence of another opening batsman, would probably struggle to keep his place in the side.

As it is his slip catching has been outstanding and epitomised a much improved England fielding performance. As Croft was quick to mention after his decisive three-wicket spell late on Monday evening, supportive fielding lifts bowlers and creates pressure. Over the last five days, New Zealand could cope with neither.

Mike Atherton, the England captain, raises his arms in triumph as the final wicket falls in Wellington yesterday
Photograph: Chris Turvey/Empics

Gough salutes a 'great captain'

ANDY FARRELL

One accusation you cannot make against the Barmy Army is that they only sing when England are winning. The travelling supporters have grown hoarse through embarrassing defeats, desperate fightbacks and anticlimactic near misses in only two years as an overseas platoon.

Since Adelaide in 1995, they have come through two tours of duty in Africa with only meagre rations to shout about. Yesterday, they got an overdue Christmas present, hence their own rendition of *Jingle Bells*. "Oh, what fun it is to see England win away," they harmonised.

The singing could also get under way in the England dressing-room half an hour after lunch with only the third overseas victory of Mike Atherton's stewardship. Skinner and Baddiel's *Three Lions* rang out as Atherton gave his victory press conference.

Whatever his body language, take a cross-section of the Lancastrian and you would doubtless find three lions and a crown. He may relinquish, or be relieved, of his job either during or prior to this summer's Ashes series, but Atherton was not about to make personal capital out of his team's win.

To promptings encouraging him to do so, Atherton displayed a straighter bat than he has shown in the middle at certain times this winter. "I am just happy to have won," he said. "Every Test win is a great moment for all different reasons. Obviously, we are a bit relieved because we have got very close a couple of times this winter.

"It was nice to finish it off and I am very pleased for the players. I think they have worked hard at the long form of the game and played some good cricket over the winter. They deserved to get a victory. Sooner or later, if you keep performing well, you will win. If you play consistently well, you will win more than you lose.

"All we talked about for the last two days was doing the basics right with the ball and upping our intensity and our energy in the field. I thought our out-cricket was top class. We bowled a good line and length all the time, backed up by some good fielding. There were some good catches taken and the pressure was always on the batsmen."

Nine-wicket Darren Gough was quick to give an appreciation of his captain. "Everybody respects Mike in the dressing-room," he said. "He is a great captain, even when he was going through that bad patch he was still the same Mike – encouraging everybody, wanting everybody to do well, supporting everybody, giving everybody confidence. He talked to me on occasions while I was out of the team last summer and that helped my confidence. He is a great captain."

"He can't say anything else while I'm sat here," Atherton replied, before rejoining the party with a note that there was a Test match in Christchurch to win, starting on Friday, before anyone should start thinking of the Australians.

For once the message about being patient came from an Australian coach. That particular species may be populating most of the cricket world, but Steve Rixon, in his first season as coach of the bottom-ranked Test team, has one of the harder challenges around. "We know what we want to do. It is just putting it in place," he said.

Rixon had to speak up over the noise from next door and though New Zealand enjoyed such a party only a couple of months ago in Pakistan, that is looking as isolated a celebration as England have managed in recent years. With his batting advisor, Martin Crowe, his priority is to sort out the batting.

"It's the concentration factor. When concentration goes there is a bit of hesitancy and also some anxiety," said Rixon, who has reason to be anxious himself. Ian Smith, the former New Zealand wicketkeeper turned television commentator, said: "Effectively, we have lost two out of two and I don't see that we have gone forward under the current coaching set-up."

WELLINGTON SCOREBOARD

New Zealand won toss

NEW ZEALAND – First Innings 124 (D Gough 5-40, A R Caddick 4-45).

ENGLAND – First Innings 383 (G P Thorpe 108, N Hussain 64, J P Crawley 56; S B Doull 5-75).

NEW ZEALAND – Second Innings

B A Pocock c Knight b Gough 64
(397 min, 271 balls, 5 fours)
S A Young c Stewart b Tufnell 56
(1332 min, 103 balls, 6 fours)
A C Parore lbw b Croft 15
(116 min, 94 balls)
S P Fleming c and b Croft 0
(9 min, 11 balls)
D N Patel lbw b Croft 0
(4 min, 2 balls)
*†L K Germon b Gough 11
(59 min, 49 balls)
N J Astle c Stewart b Gough 4
(28 min, 13 balls)
C L Cairns c Knight b Caddick 22
(60 min, 59 balls, 3 fours)
S B Doull c Knight b Gough 0
(2 min, 3 balls)
G I Allott b Caddick 2
(25 min, 15 balls)
D L Vettori not out 2
(14 min, 7 balls)
Extras (b5,lb4,nb6) 15
Total (399 min, 103.2 overs) 191

Fall: 1-89 (Young), 2-125 (Parore), 3-125 (Fleming), 4-125 (Patel), 5-161 (Germon), 6-164 (Pocock), 7-175 (Astle), 8-175 (Doull), 9-182 (Allott), 10-191 (Cairns).

Bowling: Cork 10-1-42-0 (nb2) (4-1-20-0, 4-0-14-0, 2-0-8-0); Caddick 27.2-11-46-2 (6-3-7-0, 5-1-15-0, 5-3-3-0, 11.2-4-15-2), Croft 20-9-19-3 (nb1) (5-1-6-0, 15-8-13-3), Gough 23-9-52-4 (4-2-11-0, 8-4-16-0, 2-1-4-0, 9-2-21-4), Tufnell 22-9-29-1 (nb4) (2-1-3-0, 10-3-11-1, 4-1-4-0, 7-4-11-0).

Progress: Third day: Close: 48-0 (Pocock 13, Young 32) 21 overs. Fourth day: Rain delayed start until 3.13pm. 50: 80 min, 21.2 overs. 100: 165 min, 43.1 overs. Close: 125-4 (Pocock 45, Germon 0) 73 overs. Fifth day: Rain delayed start until 11am: New ball taken: 81 overs, 147-4. 150: 309 min, 82.1 overs. Lunch: 177-8 (Cairns 12, Allott 0) 86 overs. Innings closed: 1.39pm.

Pocock's 50: 297 min, 239 balls, 3 fours.
Young's 50: 116 min, 85 balls, 5 fours.

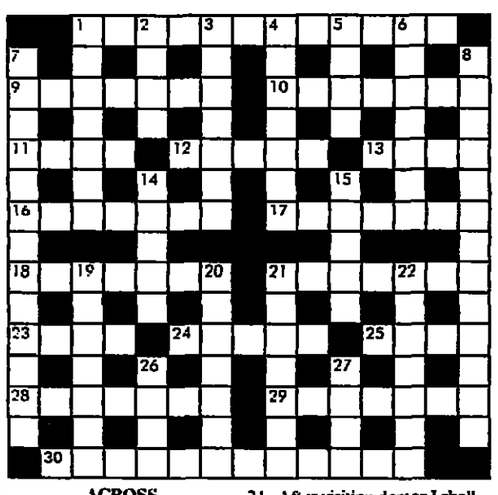
ENGLAND WON BY AN INNINGS AND 68 RUNS

Umpires: S A Bucknor (WI) and D B Cowie (NZ). **TV replay umpire:** E A Watkin. **Match referee:** P J P Burge.

Man of the match: G P Thorpe. **Adjudicator:** M P Donnelly.

THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD

No. 3219. Tuesday 11 February — By Aelred



ACROSS
1 Story has short trendy affair? (12)
9 Disturbance in court is controlled (7)
10 One going on trip to ancient city first (7)
11 Unhappy about one aforementioned (4)
12 It designates the French dance "over" (5)
13 People will take day to get better (4)
16 Perhaps non-empirical describes one on remand (7)
17 Big cat eats sloths? There's a connection here (7)
18 Record one lightweight saying (7)
21 Malady and misfortunes will hold nurse back (7)
23 Essentially hate to make a sworn statement (4)
24 After visiting doctor I shall exercise (5)
25 Spoil game that's popular (4)
28 Ignore negative lecture (7)
29 Possibly can vote for change in El Salvador (7)
30 Earl's blatant wrong is not incomprehensible? (12)

DOWN
1 It shows you've accepted changed recipe given time (7)
2 Den of mendacious type undergoing a change of heart (4)
3 Fighting vessel on a road gets in drink? Quite the reverse (7)
4 Do better than open-air trader in this? (7)
5 Missile about to be launched into South of France (4)
6 Presence in franglais perhaps which is rather chilly (7)
7 Poor spine posture hides right place for controlling body (8,5)
8 Marriage of minds? (8,5)
14 Record of one right into amateurish housework? (5)
15 Get better when joining right friend (5)
19 It's no good greeting wrong number (7)
20 In marriage, if it arises, it would be warlike (7)
21 In Cyrillic iteration is not allowed (7)
22 Teach English to accept coin that's European (7)
26 It was little to pay to get prohibition to save energy (4)
27 It could provide an opening to join king and important person (4)

Monday's Solution

MARQUISE ACTIVE
C U C V R O I
ECHO EVENTUALLY
O T N N I S L
HUMANITIES TRAP
N T N A T
STAID AGONY AUNT
O P I
DIGNITARY CRACK
M E I S L
OPUS NOMINATION
R H A R A R S
TOWERBLOCK EVER
V E L S E A T
METTLE ENDTMION

Hoddle takes good with the bad over injuries

Football

TREVOR HAYLETT

A split developed among England's injured yesterday which both delighted and disappointed Glenn Hoddle. Alan Shearer, Paul Gascoigne and David Seaman all proved their fitness for tomorrow's World Cup game with Italy but major doubts continue to concern Tony Adams and Paul Ince.

The latter pair, together with Newcastle's Robert Lee, were unable to take part in yesterday's training session at Bisham Abbey and must show significant progress to be available for the Wembley match.

"Both Adams and Ince would only be 50-50 at this stage," declared the England coach with the unperturbed air of one who knows the bad news could have been a lot, lot worse.

"Tony is still feeling his ankle and had to work on his own. Paul and Robert did a little but we were not able to bring them fully into the main group.

"I will need to have some idea of the shape of my side after tomorrow afternoon's session. Tony will be given until late on Tuesday to prove himself."

If either player is to sit out the qualifying tie between the Group Two heavyweights with 100 per cent records, England's cause would be weakened. Under Arsène Wenger's influence at Arsenal Adams has added new qualities to his renowned defensive strength while Ince, a mainstay of Internazionale's midfield, has a knowledge of how to cope with the Italian threat.

The happier side of the coin showed Shearer, Seaman and Gascoigne returning to the fold after their various injuries. Hoddle pronounced himself positive and optimistic about all three with the caveat that Shearer's problem in his lower back could yet provoke a reaction.

"You can only go into a game risking one of two," Hoddle added. "Inevitably there will be players who are going to be less than 100 per cent and that's when I have to look at all the elements and angles and see what's worth it for such a big game."

Gascoigne's recovery was the major surprise. "When his ankle was in plaster last weekend not many would have given him a chance of being available. A fit Paul Gascoigne is obviously a major bonus when others are struggling.

"We have followed him closely since the last game in Georgia and his form has been good. "What's more he has not been in so much trouble with referees. He will always be the cheeky chappie but he's determined to change the other things."

The Italy coach, Cesare Maldini, is considering employing the Real Madrid defender Christian Panucci as a sweeper in an attempt to shackle Shearer. Panucci played sweeper in the first half when the probables beat the possibles 4-1 in a training match in Florence yesterday.

"He's one of the real possibilities but it's best not to make too many changes," Maldini said before the team left for England. Chelsea's Roberto Di Matteo is expected to play alongside Dino Baggio and Demetrio Albertini in the Italian midfield, while his club-mate Gianfranco Zola should link up with Lazio striker Pierluigi Casiraghi in attack. Maldini wants his strikers to interchange and give his midfield more options.

However, Maldini also said he was pleased with the form of Middlesbrough striker Fabrizio Ravanelli and fellow forward Enrico Chiesa, who look sure to be on the bench.

■ The Football Association are investigating allegations of a tickets scandal 48 hours before England's World Cup qualifier against Italy at Wembley. It is believed that as many as 1,000 tickets are being sold on the black market at 10 times their market value.

©Published by Newspaper Publishing PLC, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL, and printed at Mirror Colour Print, St Albans Road, Watford
Back issues available from Historic Newspapers, 01988 840370.
Tuesday 11 February 1997 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office

PICASSO EXHIBITION
MODERNA MUSEET STOCKHOLM

15 Feb - 19 May 97
from £229
Picasso and the Mediterranean Myth
a major exhibition featuring about
100 exceptional works from 1906 - 1960
paintings, sculpture, drawings, prints, pottery
- Daily departures by air from Heathrow, Gatwick, Manchester and Aberdeen
- 2 nights B&B at a ★★ hotel in Stockholm
- Guaranteed entrance to the Picasso Exhibition
- Additional nights available from £27 per night
- Upgrade to an exclusive & charming ★★★/★ hotel at a small supplement

SPECIAL OFFER
Stay Friday & Saturday nights at the central ★★★ Hotel Kom from £239 and get Sunday night free
All prices include all taxes. Prices P.P. based upon 2 sharing a room. Single room supplements apply. ALL OFFERS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.
For reservations phone Mon to Fri 09.00 to 18.00:
0181-960 9066
CITYTRAVELLER DIRECT LTD
4 Exmoor St. London W10 6BD.

هكذا من الاصل